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**THE LIFE OF JAMESON**





# THE LIFE OF JAMESON

BY  
IAN COLVIN

*IN TWO VOLUMES*  
VOLUME I

WITH PORTRAITS

LONDON  
EDWARD ARNOLD AND CO.  
1922

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Printed in Great Britain by T. and A. CONSTABLE LTD  
at the Edinburgh University Press

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# THE LIFE OF JAMESON

## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

‘O’ kent and cantio folk he came.’

LEANDER STARR JAMESON, whose strange adventurous story is the subject of this book, was born in Edinburgh on February 9, 1853. The middle of the nineteenth century was an expansive age for the British people; they were then developing the world heritage left to them by their forefathers, and Jameson was one of a family of no less than eleven children.

These Jamesons came, so the tradition goes, from the Shetland Islands; and both their origin and their crest, a ship in full sail, with ‘*Sine motu*’ for motto, suggest that they once followed a seafaring life. But they had been long settled in Leith and Edinburgh. Thomas Jameson, Leander’s great-grandfather, and Thomas’s son, also Thomas, the grandfather, were shipowners and merchants of the port and burgesses of the city, and it is said that the grandfather made a fortune in whale-oil and soap-boiling during the French wars, and lost part of it by reason of the peace. Nevertheless, he must have been a well-to-do citizen, for he established his son, Leander’s father, as a Writer to the Signet, a member, that is to say, of a close corpora-



tion of lawyers enjoying certain privileges and monopolies before the Court of Session. Entrance to this corporation costs £500, and if Robert William Jameson had been of the normal type of that staid race of lawyers who live and practise in those stately streets and terraces of smooth freestone upon the north side of Edinburgh, he would have become a wealthy and prosperous citizen. But the seeds of revolt, both in politics and literature, then being sown over Europe, found a lodgment even between the granite setts and cobbles of Edinburgh, somehow surviving the snell east winds that sweep bare the very bones of the city. The young Writer to the Signet probably belonged in his student days to the roystering Court of Christopher North, to which the Ettrick Shephard was Poet Laureate. The novels of Scott, the poems of Shelley, and the oratory of Brougham were more to his liking than Erskine's *Principles* or Mackenzie's *Institutions*. It was perhaps his misfortune—or at any rate the misfortune of his family—that Jeffrey should have praised his poetry and the Lord Chancellor his oratory.<sup>1</sup> His dramatic poem *Nimrod* made a mild sensation when it was published in 1848, but the present writer had to cut its long-neglected leaves when he looked it up at the British Museum. Yet reading it the attentive critic may clearly perceive that Robert Jameson just fell short of genius. It is in the fashion of its time. Byron's *Cain* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* are its more obvious inspirations. *Nimrod*, hunter and philanthropist, courageously fights his way through a terrifying world peopled by archangels and primeval

<sup>1</sup> 'Sir John Campbell, afterwards Lord Chancellor, said that he (Jameson) was the best hustings speaker he ever heard.'—*Dictionary of National Biography*.



ROBERT JAMISON HIS FATHER



monsters. He converses familiarly with Abdiel and Abaddon and has spiritual conflicts with Satan and the priests of Baal. The Deluge and the Tower of Babel furnish the dreadful stage—

‘ Clouds swept around

While a cold dead man’s hand grasped thine ; its joints  
Oozed with black poison as it dragged thee down  
Through echoing vaults peopled with human wails.’

Only the very great—a Virgil, a Dante, or a Milton—can venture to such heights and depths with impunity. But the reader of this poem must admit that although Jameson was not one of these, he had eloquence, energy, and the gift—dangerous in vorse—of rhetoric. And there are touches here and there of pure poetry, as for example—

‘ The airy music lessening,  
Floating away on gentlest wing,  
Till all with drowsy silence close  
(The blest beginning of repose),

Like the last, faint, blushing sunbeam leaving the sleeping  
rose.’

*Timoleon*, a tragedy in five acts, was performed at the Adelphi Theatre in Edinburgh in 1852, and ran to a second edition. The tale of the patriot, touched by ‘ a shade of blame . . . in consequence of the murder of his elder brother Timophanes,’ is overladed with anti-slavery propaganda. The nap of these philanthropies is now worn threadbare by time, and the sentiments of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in the mouth of an ancient Athenian hardly satisfies the historical sense. We must both laugh and grieve a little over these swelling orations and that generous enthusiasm. But they tempted Jameson farther and farther from the dull and safe paths of

his legal profession. He threw himself into every liberal cause. The Reform, Anti-Slavery, and Anti-Corn Law movements enlisted his eloquence and absorbed his energy; but suited ill, as the reader may suppose, with the practice of a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh. He was plainly a Radical, suspect also of Free Thought. Worse still, he was an innovator in Municipal politics. What the public gained his clients suffered, and his practice fell into decay with the growth of his fame and his family.

That family was calculated rather on the comfortable perquisites of the law than on the little oatmeal of literature. In the year 1835 he had married one of the Pringles of Symington, and those who compare the portrait of the son with that of the mother will gather whence the air of breeding, and in particular the delicately-curved, kestrel-like nose, was derived.

The Pringles had owned the hilly pastures of Symington for five hundred years; Charles the Second had granted a younger son lands in South Carolina, near Charleston, where a branch of the family long remained; they had their town house in one of the closes of the High Street, and they once owned the estate of Coates Hall but unluckily sold it before it was covered, as it is now, by the massive and stately streets and terraces of Western Edinburgh. They were related besides to the Pringles of the Haining, of Terquhan, and of Tersants, and other such 'braw, braw lads of Gala Water.'

Robert Jameson's father-in-law, Major-General Pringle, is still remembered in family and local tradition, a soldier like a steel sword in temper and bearing. His wife was Christian Watson, also of 'kent folk,' as we gather from the fact that Chris-



CHRISTIAN PRINGLE HIS MOTHER



tian's sister married a Haig of Bemersyde. Their daughter Christian, whom Robert Jameson married, was, as we should expect of her ancestry, a lady of character. A strong sense of duty was the best part of her inheritance, and corrected, as far as was possible, the effects of her husband's rashness.

Leander—'Lanner'—as his brothers called him—was the youngest of eleven, all boys save one. Some little time before his birth the Jamesons left their house in Warriston Crescent for the flat (5 Charlotte Street) where Leander was born. The names of his christening, Leander Starr, were his father's homage to an American who had done him a service in some business affair. When the boy was only eighteen months old his father resolved to put Edinburgh and law behind him.

Robert Jameson had not prospered as a Writer to the Signet—whether because he disliked the formal walks of law or because his clients disliked his Radicalism and his free expression of Free Thought. A Whig friend and patron, the Earl of Stair, came to the rescue; Robert Jameson was made editor of the *Wigtownshire Free Press*, controlled by that nobleman in his party's interest, and the Jameson family thereupon moved to the headquarters of the newspaper, the little border town of Stranraer, where the family remained until 1860, that is to say, until little Lanner had reached the age of seven. He was by all accounts an alert and sprightly child. It may be fanciful to suggest that he inherited a precocious interest in the phenomena of nature from his grand-uncle, Robert Jameson, famous in his day as Professor of Geology at the University of Edinburgh, but certain it is that at the age of two—so the old ladies of his family relate—he was seen holding a



piece of ice before the fire to warm it, as he said, before eating it, and about the same time he was extremely concerned at the changing phases of the moon. When at last he saw it again in the full, he cried in delight, 'The moon is mended!' His confidence in himself we may trace back to the age of six, when it is recorded that he drank a glass of sherry and exclaimed, 'Now I feel as if I could go and do everything.'

It is characteristic, too, that although he left Stranraer at the age of seven, and never as far as we know returned to the town, he remembered with a certain humorous appreciation the natives of the place. Thirty years afterwards (in a letter he wrote to his brother Sam from Fort Salisbury at the end of 1890) he retails with his usual gusto some gossip he had gathered from a Stranraer man who happened to be there—

'My old flame of eight years old or less, Jeannie Ellison, is still in Stranraer and unmarried . . . old David Guthrie still to the fore, as lively as ever, etc. etc.'

In 1860 Robert Jameson inherited a legacy, and invested the money in the purchase of two small provincial newspapers, the *Suffolk and Essex Free Press* and the *Essex and Suffolk News*, both published in the town of Sudbury. For eighteen months Robert Jameson laboured to strike sparks from the unresponsive East Anglian marl, during which time Leander learned his rudiments at Sudbury Grammar School; but the place was judged not to be suitable to the health of Mrs. Jameson, and presently the family removed to London. By this time it had become clear that the venture could only end in the total loss of the capital invested, and soon after

Robert Jameson sold both papers for about half of what he had given for them.

Thenceforth the family lived in Chelsea and Kensington. Robert Jameson continued to write for the reviews, and, serene in failure, illuminated the family circle with his brilliant talk or consoled his tedium with the novels of Sir Walter Scott. When at last he died, in 1868, the love and true appreciation of these novels, an indomitable spirit, a native eloquence, a beautiful voice, a sprightly wit, and a conquering charm composed the inheritance he left to the youngest of his children.

Mrs. Jameson continued the battle of life with the unflinching courage of her race, supported as she was until he died by her father, the old General. The family were all carefully educated. Kate, the only daughter, and two of the brothers had been sent to school in Germany. The eldest son, Tom, the mainstay of the family, became a naval doctor at Plymouth, repressing higher ambitions in order to support his mother and educate his younger brothers. 'I see,' he said, 'a dark tunnel with £200 a year at the end of it.' Leander went to the Godolphin School in Hammersmith, an excellent school in its time but now no longer existing. There he did well both in lessons and in games. Short though he was of stature, and slight of build, he nevertheless excelled in running and jumping—an early promise of the indomitable spirit which was afterwards to support him in his arduous marches of war and exploration.

We get a clear glimpse of the boy from a bundle of letters written to his family while he was on a visit to Edinburgh, at the end of 1868; they bubble with the joy and gusto of fifteen, undamped by a

poverty which is part of the fun. There were Glasgow as well as Edinburgh cousins to be seen, and his thrifty mother had ordered it that the Glasgow visit should be made on the return journey. Part of one letter to his mother is devoted to a laborious explanation of how he divagated from this programme because 'Bobbie came in just five minutes before the time, and said that the return ticket was only 4s. 6d. and the single 3s. and besides if I had gone at the end by myself I would have had to take a cab for my portmanteau, so it was cheaper I went.' The exiguous contents of the said portmanteau troubled him a little, as he writes to his sister: 'I was an awful ass not to bring my dress boots. At Glasgow Bobbie and Alan never wore anything else, and then going out to those swell dinners I felt very clumsy without them; also it needed a great deal of management to make my single shirt do; of course I had to wear fronts; but I had to be very careful in my movements, as they would have come out, because my dress waistcoat is so open. It was well I brought the waistcoat or I would have had to stay at home altogether. Those were my only troubles, and they were very small.'

How much joy overtopped troubles appears in all the letters, especially when he writes to his beloved artist brother, Midge: 'Edinburgh looks splendid—quite different from any other town I ever saw. It is all so irregular, and the hills all round about it, and then when you are in Princes Street Gardens to see the rock which the Castle stands on rising up above you! But the people are better than the place. I am sure if you were here you would be quite converted as to sights being better than people.'

People were, indeed, always the most interesting part of life to Jameson. Those boyish letters are already full of that delight in human nature which remained to the day of his death the staple of his entertainment and conversation. These Pringle and Jameson aunts and uncles and cousins are vastly more interesting to him than Holyrood and the Castle or the view from Corstorphine Hill.

In the year 1870 Lanner entered at University College, Gower Street, for the study of medicine. Tom, at that time a naval staff surgeon at Plymouth, lent him £100 to pay his fees. On January 25, 1870, he writes with some glee to Tom that he has passed his entrance, and that he rather favours University College because natural history is one of the subjects, whereas at King's he would have to 'grind' German and Divinity. We hear of him 'grinding' Xenophon's *Hellenics* for the entrance and finding Huxley's *Classification of the Animal Kingdom* 'not at all inviting.' He passes nevertheless, but fails for the Fellowship. 'I have been cursing the examiners and examination ever since,' he writes to Tom, 'so am rather tired of talking any more about it.' Yet in due course he distinguished himself as a medical student. He was Gold Medallist in *Materia Medica*, and after qualifying as a doctor was made Resident Medical Officer at University College Hospital.

The testimony of his contemporaries is that if he had remained in London he must have become a famous surgeon. His courage, his eager and alert mind, his habit of swift decision—these qualities, native to his character, would have made—and were making him—a reputation. In the great institution to which he was now attached there were at that time three Resident Surgeons, three Resident Physi-

cians, and a Resident Medical Officer in charge of the Hospital. Jameson—who was now both a Doctor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Science of the London University, and a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and L.S.A. London—occupied all three positions successively.

The first two he obtained by examination, the last by election. As Resident Surgeon his chief was Marshall, President of the Royal College of Surgeons; as Resident Physician he served under Russell Reynolds; as Resident Medical Officer he was under Sir William Jenner. For a time he was Surgical Registrar, a post which included all the microscopic work of the hospital as well as the reporting of its surgical work. Again he was Ophthalmic Assistant to Stretfield, the Professor of Ophthalmology, and was himself for a time Demonstrator of Anatomy in the College. He also assisted Dr. Tilbury Fox, Professor of Skin Diseases. Such a list suggests what in fact he was, a brilliant young doctor with a great career before him. He was the friend and intimate of the great men he served. He had already made a reputation as a surgeon. Those who watched him at work say that never was touch more light, hand more confident, or eye more sure. Why then did he choose to exile himself in a Mining Camp in a South African wilderness?

Possibly there was an overpowering restlessness in his Northern blood. The London-Scottish family of whom he was one were already blowing like thistledown over the world. Of the brothers, Edward and Ross died in infancy; John was drowned at sea when he was eighteen; Tom, after serving as dresser in the Crimea, was settled as staff surgeon at Plymouth; Bob had gone to sea when

he was eleven, had been shipwrecked on an Australian coast, and had wandered for years in the Bush, serenely enduring all manner of incredible adventures; Julius was already in South Africa, the partner of one Irvine, a Scottish storekeeper in King William's Town; Sam was shortly to follow him as bookkeeper, and later as manager of the Johannesburg branch of the business; Middleton was drifting tranquilly into his artist life in Paris; and Kate, the eldest, and the only sister, had married her cousin Robert Pringle, and was happily settled in Edinburgh.

Leander began to wander too: first a short flight to Paris with Midge, where he saw the brief terrors of the Commune and the Prussian troops outside Paris;<sup>1</sup> then a longer flight to America 'with an opium-eater anxious to be cured of the same.'<sup>2</sup>

About this time a remarkable thing happened. Julius, as we gather from the letters, sent home a diamond. 'Julius's diamond,' Leander writes to Tom, 'is much larger than we expected, and appears to be nearly quite fine; but it is not cut, so, as he advises, I am going to keep it in its present condition till I can afford to make a swell affair of it.'

The diamond may have flashed in his mind as well as in his cravat when he chanced upon an application to the authorities of University College

• <sup>1</sup> The two boys, as Middleton told the present writer long afterwards, were partly amused, partly horrified, to see a Prussian officer pull one of his men out of the ranks, shake him, box both of his ears, and throw him staggering back again.

<sup>2</sup> 'Really not at all a bad fellow,' he writes to Tom, 'except for the infernal opium. He takes about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  of Batley's solution per day. I intend gradually to reduce him as much as possible—then, when that has gone as far as possible, cut him off entirely, and treat him like a lunatic for a week or two.'

History is silent as to the result, but one would be willing to wager—if there were any chance of a settlement—that Jameson cured him.

by a Dr. Prince, of Kimberley, in search of a partner. Certain it is that he offered himself, was accepted, arranged terms of partnership and succession to the practice, and sailed for South Africa in the *Drummond Castle* in the year 1878.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DIAMOND DIGGINGS

‘But now it is high time for us to weigh our ankers, to hoise up our sailes, to get cleare of these boisterous, frosty and misty seas, and with all speed to direct our course for the milde lightsome temperate and warme Atlantick Ocean over which the Spaniards and Portugales have made so many pleasant prosperous and golden voyages.’

WE gather from early portraits and the stories of old friends what sort of young man it was that gazed at the grey precipices of Table Mountain—those mighty gates of stone to a strange unknown land—from the taffrail of the *Drummond Castle* in the year 1878. Jameson was then twenty-five years of age, small of stature, very light and slim of body, boyish, keen and confident in look and bearing. And his confidence was already justified by achievement. Youngster as he was, he had directed a great hospital; he had been the idol of its students and of its nurses; his skill of hand and sureness of eye, as well as the swiftness and precision of his diagnosis, had already made him famous, at least in Gower Street. And Gower Street was a world in itself: to be Resident Medical Officer at University College Hospital was to be master of a very efficient, a very precise, and a very important organisation. It was to prove yourself a man as well as a physician. And this is the impression we get of Jameson at that time, the beau-ideal of a young Staff Surgeon, efficient, treating men and women with a masterly and humorous benevolence, learned already in that



greatest of all schools of humanity, the school of healing, and from this knowledge sympathetic with its weakness, tolerant of its frailties, accustomed already to command in the gravest possible emergencies, and to cut upon the instant with a keen swift knife into issues of life and death. With these qualities of manhood there were qualities peculiar to the man: an inherent charm, a brusque yet winning manner, chiefly compounded of mirth and sympathy, that none, or few, could resist, and a joyous almost reckless zest in life and carelessness of self and selfish interest. He was already a man in whom a man who knew men would repose his trust.

The young surgeon could hardly have had the time or the knowledge to dive very deep into the secrets of the fair capital through which he strolled for a day or two before starting upon his long journey to the north. A white city, half of the East and half of the West, partly Dutch, partly British, both African and Asiatic, more in the past than in the present—her broad sun-stricken streets, her old and stately Colonial houses, jealously green-shuttered, with romantic glimpse of pomegranate and vine in mouldering courtyard. As she lay under her hemisphere of mountain, beside her Bay, her appearance of profound slumber might have deceived even so keen an eye as Jameson's. Yet great issues were ripening at that time in Cape Town; a great struggle was going on between masters both of statecraft and politics. The Cape had then been governed for some half-dozen years by its own responsible Ministers; but the diverse forces of Crown and popular Government, of British Imperialism and Dutch Nationalism, were already almost come to a deadlock. Sir Bartle Frere, among the greatest of Colonial Governors,

was attempting the impossible task, to which he had been committed before his arrival, which was to break him in the end, of federating South Africa over the heads of its people. It had been attempted too late for the old dispensation and too early for the new. The Transvaal had been allowed to become a Republic: it was now—1878—annexed; the Orange Free State between it and Cape Colony was still independent; Natal to the east was a loyal Crown Colony; but the Cape was a State with Responsible Government in which the British of the towns were rapidly losing their old power before the newly united national sentiment of the Dutch farmers, nominally commanded by the Prime Minister, Molteno, but really directed by that sagacious National leader, Jan Hofmeyr.

When Jameson arrived the talk was all of federation: to the new-comer it might have seemed an easy task; Sir Bartle Frere must have already known better. First to let loose turbulent and contrary forces, to give them liberty, to give them head, and then to unite them by a mixture of force, persuasion, and *coup d'état*, was to be proved an impossible and disastrous experiment.

Kimberley lay six hundred miles to the north of Cape Town, and at that time the railway had penetrated only as far as Wellington in the midst of a pleasant region of mountain and valley, the valleys sparkling with swift rushing rivers, and clad with vine and orchard and oak coppice, the mountains scarred, precipitous, naked rock. Thence the coach climbed up through wild ravines into the wilderness of the Karoo. Strange indeed and desolate it must have seemed to the young London doctor—this high, vast, empty, interior region, its earth baked hard by

an almost perpetual sun, scantily clad with a sort of sage-brush, the 'Karoo' from which it took its name, its barren covering of sandstone and shale pierced with scarred and naked diorite, precipitous of side and often level as a wall, gaunt and sheer above the plain. Under the changeless sun of noonday it had a look of utter desolation, as of an earth long dead, as if it were the surface of the moon, yet it was touched at dawn and sunrise with the richest colours—rose, violet, amber—as with an unspeakable rapture. . . .

Through this desolate yet spell-weaving country, passing nothing but an occasional herd of goats or goat-like sheep, or a white-washed hut of sun-baked brick inhabited by the pastoral Boer, Jameson's coach laboured for five or six days until at last it reached the great Orange River, running in its deep rocky channel under a fringe of African willows and mimosas; and so on over roads growing worse, deep in parching sand, and large, round, and quite unbindable pebbles, until a cloud of fine, almost impalpable dust, a variety of unspeakable stenches, the carcasses of oxen and horses, heaps of refuse, shanties made of gunny bags and old biscuit tins, companies of almost naked Kafirs, singing as they marched, with knobkerry on shoulder, tilted wagons with long spans of oxen, miners in jackboots, corduroy trousers, and blue shirts, hills of grey-blue spoil, and then streets lined with shanties of matchwood and corrugated iron, full of Gentiles and Jews from all parts of the earth, bore in upon him the appalling truth that here was his destination.

When the young Doctor had time to examine his new home more at leisure he found that the centre or rather the centres of activity were four enormous

pits, all within a mile or two of one another, the Kimberley, De Beers, Bultfontein, and Dutoitspan mines. A diamond field, as Mr. Gardner Williams truly says, bears no sort of resemblance to a jeweller's show tray, and these pits bore no resemblance to anything in the world that Jameson or anybody else ever saw before. They were already so deep that to look down into them required nerve and youth in a stranger. They were oval or roughly circular in shape, each of them covering some acres in area, surrounded by a huge framework of rough timber, from which numberless iron hawsers attached to windlasses descended into the depths. These wires, intricate and numerous as the threads of a spider's web, were constantly on the move upwards and downwards, bearing bags of raw hide, empty on their downward course but on their upward full of fragments of a rocklike blue-coloured clay of which these deep craters appeared to be full. And as Jameson's eyes grew accustomed to the dust and the depth he could discern that the bottom and sides of the pits were like the crumbling interior of an old Stilton cheese, gouged and hacked out without any sort of system, at all levels and at all angles. On the various steps and stairs, wells, ramps, terraces, and parapets so formed were gangs of naked Kafirs, their barbaric songs and shouts making a faint hum in the upper air. These with hoes and pickaxes were breaking up the clay and loading it into the leathern bags to be hauled up as they were filled by the white engineers working their donkey-engines on the scaffolding above. And behind the scaffolding the claim-holders themselves, or their servants, worked beside the crumbling heaps of diamond-bearing clay, spreading it out over the veld to be

decomposed by the weather or pounding it with hammers in their eagerness to release the diamonds it contained. And the clay, broken and sieved into a loose sand, was tumbled on to tables over which the sorters pored with unwinking eyes, picking out the greasy white crystals as they caught the rays of the sun.

Such, in rough outline, was the industry which supported the mixed population of thirty or forty thousand people who clustered and swarmed round mines and diamond market: the claim-holders themselves, chiefly British, honest and generous in the main, usually pressed for ready money to pay their Kafir gangs, and selling their diamonds as they found them to dealers, mainly Jewish, who lurked in their tin shanties in the centre of the growing town, or picked their way through the dust and the spoil-heaps to chaffer for stones round the sorting tables and tents of the diggers. Then there were the store-keepers and the merchants who supplied the camp with victuals and mining tools; the dealers in Kafir-truck, who sold blankets, mealie-meal, and even Tower muskets at great profits to the 'boys,' who hardly knew what to do with their wages; and beneath and around these the disreputable trades, labour-touts, liquor-sellers, illicit diamond-buyers, Jews and Levantines, a plausible, voluble, accommodating sub-community, so skilful in their intrigues, and so powerful in the interests which united them, as sometimes to threaten the very existence of the industry on which they battered.

We may suppose that Jameson, with his eager inquiring turn of mind, very soon mastered the brief history of this extraordinary place. Only eight years before, as the first chance acquaintance might have

told him, the swarming camp was a bare stretch of veld, like almost any other piece of country for hundreds of miles in any direction. It had only one feature to distinguish it—a pan, as it is called in South Africa, or depression in the ground, made water-tight by natural deposits of lime, so as to contain the waters of occasional thunderstorms, the only rainfall of those regions, as in a reservoir. This served to water the flocks of a neighbouring Boer, Abraham Pauls Du Toit, and was therefore called Du Toit's Pan.

The 'farm' of Du Toit was situated in the western angle formed by the junction of the Orange and the Vaal, and was about twenty-five miles distant from the 'river-diggings' of the Vaal. For it must here be explained that before the dry diggings of Du Toit's Pan were discovered, diamonds had been found in the bed and on the banks of this tributary of the Orange. In 1867 the little son of a pastoral Boer, watching his father's sheep and goats on the bank of the Orange River, thirty miles above its junction with the Vaal, gathered some shining pebbles, which lay in heaps and drifts in the river-bed. 'Here,' says Mr. Gardner Williams, 'were garnets with their rich carmine flush, the fainter rose of cornelian, the bronze of jasper, the thick cream of chalcedony, heaps of agates of motley hue, and many shining rock-crystals'<sup>1</sup>—wonderful treasures in the eyes of a child. He brought some of them home, and played with them on the earthen floor of pounded ant-heap, glazed with a weekly wash of liquid cow-dung. In the dusky light one of these stones so shone and sparkled that it attracted the notice of the farmer's

<sup>1</sup> *The Diamond Mines of South Africa*, by Gardner F. Williams. (1906.) Vol. I.

wife, who gave it to a neighbour, Schalk Van Niekerk, who passed it on to a travelling packman, John O'Reilly, who showed it to Mr. Lorenzo Boyes the local Magistrate, who sent it to Dr. Guybone Atherstone, a geologist of Grahamstown, who found after 'spoiling all the jewellers' files in the town,' that it was a 'veritable diamond weighing  $21\frac{1}{4}$  carats and worth £500.'

Then the search began, and in March 1869 a Griqua shepherd found the famous Star of South Africa, which he bartered with Van Niekerk for a span of oxen, who sold it to some Hope Town Jews for £11,200, who sent it to their fraternity in London, who sold it to Lord Dudley for £25,000.

The search grew hot, and a band of Natal pioneers, led by Captain Rolleston, of whom Herbert Rhodes, brother of Cecil Rhodes, was one, washed for and at last found diamonds in the gravel of the Vaal River, at a point about twenty-five miles to the north-east of Dutoitspan. This was at the beginning of 1870, and all through that year a growing stream of 'river-diggers' poured across the wilderness to work with pick and shovel under the mimosas and willows that made a pleasant shade along the banks of the Vaal. These diggers used to outspan before the last stage of their journey beside Dutoitspan, and in September 1870 it became noised about that a diamond had been picked up on a kopje or ridge near the house of Du Toit. Soon this stony ridge was covered with eager prospectors, who found first of all a thin layer of hard limestone, a mere incrustation on the surface; beneath, a sort of decomposed yellow ground, with streaks of greenish shale, and beneath this again the same yellow ground grown a little harder, like soft yellow cement, which could easily be broken

up by the pick and crumbled to dust in the sun. In this stuff they found diamonds, some on the surface, thrown up perhaps by a meerkat or an antbear, but not only on the surface, for they were scattered thinly, but with a certain rough approach to uniformity, through the 'stuff' below.

The diggers had no suspicion of anything more than a surface deposit of diamondiferous soil, but they found working on the ridge more profitable than working on the river. It was less pleasant, but it was also less laborious. It was very much easier to break up the clay and knock it to pieces at the side of the claim than to prise up the boulders of the river-bed in order to reach the gravel. And above all there were more diamonds. The invasions increased until there was no ground left unpegged on the ridge. The prospectors spread farther afield. Early in 1871 diamonds were found near the neighbouring farmhouse of Bultfontein, and in May they were discovered in the farm of Vooruitzicht. This farm, about two miles from Dutoitspan, had at one time been a portion of the farm of Bultfontein, but had been sold to D. A. and J. N. De Beer on April 18, 1860. It is a name that we must note particularly, for in due time De Beers' farm became De Beers Mine, the mine which Cecil Rhodes made the basis of his plans. Rush succeeded rush with find after find, and two months after De Beers was discovered came the famous 'New Rush' to Colesberg Kopje, a gently sloping hill one mile from De Beers, so called by a party of diggers from the Colonial town of Colesberg who discovered it, which developed later into the Kimberley Mine, no less famous than De Beers.

The first digger to cut down through the soft



yellow ground on the Dutoitspan kopje to the hard blue clay beneath carefully covered it up again, sprinkled some yellow ground over the blue, sold his claim, and left hurriedly, and it was generally believed that with the blue clay the miners had come to the bottom of the mine. But one miner, more enterprising than the rest, broke up the 'blue,' brought it to the surface, pounded it down with a mallet, and found diamonds. Moreover, the first diamond at New Rush was found seventy-six feet down. Its finders were sinking a well, and when they had got to that depth they discovered the stone, a magnificent diamond of 80 carats, sticking in the side of the shaft. There was no longer room for doubt. These were not surface deposits, they were diamond mines.

Now, before these mines were discovered, the 'farms' on which they were situated were so nearly worthless that their market price might be three-pence or sixpence an acre when a buyer could be found. The territory itself was of so little value and so little known that the question even of sovereignty was undecided. Some claimed it for the Orange Free State, others, with an equal show of reason, for one Waterboer, a 'bastard' chief, who said he was under the protection of the British Government. The river-diggers on the Vaal had pegged out their gravel in 'claims' of thirty-foot square, an arbitrary but convenient convention. These claims belonged to the prospectors who pegged them out; but were theirs only for as long as they worked them. The owner of the land asked for a small ground rent, and considered himself lucky if the diggers paid it. This custom of the river-diggings was transferred to the 'dry diggings' of Dutoitspan.

Let the reader suppose a round Stilton cheese, the common possession of a hungry boarding-house of twenty people. They agree to divide it into twenty squares, which are marked out on the top of the cheese, and registered. The boarders cut down into their own claims as their needs prompt them, but must eat some cheese at least once a week and are not allowed to encroach upon the claims of their neighbours. Boarders who leave can sell their claims to others, or subdivide their claims among several new-comers, or let their claims; but they cannot take over more than one. Each digs down according to his taste or appetite, and as they go down, the encircling wall of the cheese and the growing inequalities of its surface crumble and fall in. It is easy to see in what difficulties, disputes, and uncertainties such a system would involve the boarders.

Truly, a curious example of evolution in the law of property. In 1869 the land is almost valueless, unsurveyed and sometimes unbeaconed, to be bought at sixpence an acre in great tracts whose owner lives unchronicled days in uncontrolled idleness. In 1870, with the discovery of a new value, ownership—or shall we call it effective occupation?—shrinks from thousands of morgen to thirty feet square per man, and depends on the almost unremitting toil of the individual digger. Then in 1871 a new dimension in values is discovered, and the new law of property is stretched to apply not only to superficial areas but to cover a value in cubic feet of soil. Here gradually the second law breaks down, and no doubt Jameson was told, as he gazed down into the mine, that one owner one claim was no longer possible, that the claims were being amalga-

mated into larger and larger blocks, which were now being owned and worked no longer by individuals but by syndicates and companies of diggers. The second convention was passing away, evolving into a new convention of monopoly, and the leader in this new movement was a young English claimholder who had been there almost from the beginning, a queer, dreamy, brooding young fellow—Cecil Rhodes.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EPIDEMIC

'He that is valiant, and dares fight,  
Though drubb'd can lose no honour by 't.'

BUTLER.

JAMESON was soon to discover that this camp of apparently insane activities in which he was landed was the seat of great affairs. But in the meantime, we may suppose, his chief interest was his immediate business, to make good as a doctor. His partner, Prince, an elderly man with a large practice, proposed to retire in favour of his junior at the end of 1881. That retirement was hastened by an unfortunate case, which gives us our first distinct glimpse of Jameson's qualities as a man. One of Dr. Prince's patients, a hysterical young woman, made a ridiculous charge against her doctor, which was hotly taken up by her husband. The husband, indeed, sought out Dr. Prince in his club, struck him in the face, and then sent two friends to challenge him to a duel. The old man, overwhelmed by this whirlwind attack, proposed to offer a conditional apology. If the lady felt herself insulted by his medical treatment he was willing to express his regret. Dr. Jameson took a very different line: 'You be d——d,' he said to the Seconds; 'you go and bring Mr. W—— here, and we'll speak to him and tell him the truth.'

Mr. W—— refused to listen to reason, and proceeded to placard the town with denunciations of

the moral and medical character of Dr. Prince. Dr. Prince was a meek man ; but this was too much for his patience and he proceeded to law. The case was tried, and both Dr. Jameson and Cecil Rhodes were among the witnesses. Rhodes's testimony that the husband was 'an exceedingly excitable man' was obviously true. As for Dr. Jameson, he helped to save his partner from an awkward position by the incisive clearness with which he gave his evidence. He had made careful notes at the time, he demonstrated the discrepancies in the lady's story, he showed how the charges she brought could not possibly have been true ; and he ended with the remark, which may here be set down as a maxim of prudence for the benefit of the medical profession : 'The earliest lesson taught him by his professor of medical jurisprudence was not to make examinations of females unless in the presence of another female, if possible, on purpose to guard against charges made by hysterical or unprincipled parties.'<sup>1</sup> The judge accepted Dr. Jameson's testimony at every point—that the lady had not called for the protection of her servant, who was in the next room ; that she had accepted a prescription from the doctor at the end of the visit of which she complained : on these and other points both Dr. Jameson's evidence and his deductions were conclusive, and the Court found for Dr. Prince.

The case, however, had been clearly too much for Dr. Prince's nerves : he sold the remainder of his practice to his partner and retired, and as Dr. Prince's share in the receipts for that year had been £5000, Dr. Jameson was now in command of a very considerable income.

His fame grew. His surgical skill was considered

<sup>1</sup> See the Kimberley papers for February 24, 1881.

marvellous, not only by laymen, but by his fellow-practitioners; he was master of the latest methods and was far more highly trained than any other doctor in the camp, and he soon became by common consent the first doctor in Kimberley. His fame indeed went far beyond the town. In the capital of the Orange Free State President Brand was then suffering from Bright's disease, and his medical adviser, an old German missionary, was not markedly successful with his prescription of soup made from tortoises taken from the neighbouring sluits. The Executive Council, regarding the illness of their beloved President as an affair of State, held a meeting and decided to call in the brilliant young doctor from Kimberley. Dr. Jameson arrived, and tactfully persuaded the German to try a more suitable treatment, whereby the President's health was considerably improved.

The Doctor's popularity was in no way diminished by a kindly irony habitual to him, especially when called in by anxious ladies to treat the more or less imaginary ailments of their babies and themselves. His humorous prescription to a fanciful patient who complained of a pain in her back—'rub it with a brick'—became proverbial in the camp, and the tradition remains in Kimberley to this day of the Doctor—how he used to drive—in a billycock hat—a very smart victoria with two very fast black horses; how he performed miraculous operations, and effected marvellous cures; of his wonderful kindness to the poor, and indeed to everybody; of the famous dances he gave, and the boxing matches at which he was bottle-holder; and of his skill and daring in the game of poker. There is a tradition, which may be just worthy of mention in passing—with the warning that it is quite unsupported by

evidence—that he once staked his savings, his practice, his house, his cart, and his horses on a single game, and lost and won them all back again the same night. The legend—and many other such floating stories of the same sort—may be a distortion of the incident related in Dr. Hans Sauer's little book, *The Far East Rand* :—

‘When on this hunting-trek (in the winter of 1883) I crossed the Drakensberg, passing through the Pilgrim’s Rest Gold-field, where my old friend, J. B. Taylor, showed me the first quartz reef I have ever seen. At the local alluvial gold-digging, in and about Mac Mac, I came across Sir Starr Jameson—Dr. Jim as he was known to us all—Percy Fitzpatrick, Stafford Parker (Ex-President of the Diamond Fields Republic), Ikey Sonnenberg, the most irresponsible wit of South Africa; Bob Jameson, and Captain Macintosh, the fiery Scotsman, who wanted to fight duels on every occasion. It was at a poker party there that a suggestion was made that we should go out and bag some lions that had been killing stock in the neighbourhood. When the proposal was made to Sonnenberg, Ikey said, “I ain’t lost no lions and I ain’t going to look for any.” Jameson and I played a rather famous game of poker here. He was the dealer and dealt me two kings, and I bought three cards, amongst which he gave me two more kings, so that I had four in hand. He also only kept two and bought three more. With the four kings in my hand I bragged up to £800, which represented all my cash resources at the time. Jameson kept raising me until I was forced to put in my wagon and oxen, guns and outfit, and finally a pair of top-boots, of which I was inordinately proud. Upon which he saw me and beat me with a straight flush. I rose from the table broke to the world. He kindly returned me the top-boots—to which he added my surgical instruments (for the good of the community).’

Some or most of these tales may be ill founded or

exaggerated; but Dr. Sauer, then a young South African fresh from a medical course at Edinburgh, at least is a voracious witness, and the general impression is no doubt true—of a quick, witty, mercurial, kindly, laughter-loving young doctor, confident in his powers, benevolent to the world, exhilarating and invigorating, full of the joyous, extravagant, courageous, irreverent, and democratic spirit of the Diamond Diggings.

His reputation as a doctor may have suffered, but his popularity was rather increased by his share in the once famous smallpox controversy which raged no less fiercely than the epidemic itself in South Africa during the early 'eighties. It appears that in May 1882 the disease broke out in the Cape Peninsula where no less than 4000 people, or so it is estimated, succumbed to its ravages. The diggers of Kimberley took all possible precautions, legal and illegal, to keep the epidemic at arm's length. It was not so much that they feared the disease, but the ruin of their town and their industry. For Kimberley depended for its fuel, its supplies, and its labour on a vast tract of country. The faggots necessary to keep its engines and its pumps at work were gathered over the length and breadth of Bechuanaland; its labour came from the unknown north, from the Central Highlands of Basutoland, and from the still more distant regions of the Transkei and Natal. Its cattle and sheep, fruit and vegetables were ridden and driven in by Boer transport riders and farmers from almost every point of the compass. If the inward flow of these necessary supplies were stopped, whether by quarantine or by panic, ruin would swiftly follow.

The farmers, the transport riders, and the natives



—so it was argued—would not dare to come near Kimberley if the camp were infected, or declared an infected area. And there was not only the disease to fear, but there were the savage ceremonies of disinfection also. A barbarous medical tradition prescribed a terrifying ordeal. The disinfecting chamber was a closed shed, filled with the fumes of burning sulphur, in which the hapless traveller was confined for the space of three asphyxiating minutes. As a great concession white men were allowed to put their heads through a hole in the wall, thus avoiding suffocation; but Kafirs were denied this privilege on the ground that ‘infection may lurk in their woolly locks,’ and were dragged out at the end of their three minutes of Hades often more dead than alive, choking with the sulphurous acid. Whether the process had any effect on the microbe was a matter of doubt, but it was nearly fatal to the man.

Now the community of Kimberley at that time was the Ishmael of South Africa—far in the desert, but surrounded at a distance by more or less suspicious and hostile States. The danger of these by no means sympathetic authorities establishing a cordon which would strangle Kimberley was felt to be more serious than the epidemic itself.

For a time the disease was kept at arm’s length by means of a quarantine station established without any legal authority by the diggers upon the Modder River, some thirty miles from the mines. There Dr. Hans Sauer intercepted all who came from the infected area to the south and put every one ‘through it.’ Many an outraged traveller—from Jews to Judges of Her Majesty’s Circuit—sputtering with rage and sulphur fumes—threatened him with legal proceedings. But an unseen hand—he afterwards

suspected that it was the hand of Cecil Rhodes—squared every case before it could come to Court. By such means smallpox was kept out of Kimberley from September 1882 to March 1883, when the epidemic was declared to be over.

But then came an alarm from an altogether unexpected quarter. In October 1883, at a special meeting of the Town Council, the Sanitary Inspector reported an 'alleged outbreak' of smallpox at Klerksdorp, near Potchefstroom, in the Transvaal away to the north-east. Four natives had died, and it was thought that the infection had come from Delagoa Bay.

Now the Transvaal authorities rose at once to the height of the occasion. Dr. Dyer, the Chief Medical Officer to the Transvaal Government, reported that the disease was not *variola* (smallpox) but an aggravated form of *varicella* (chicken-pox). Dr. Francis, sent to report by the Orange Free State, came to the same comfortable opinion, and Dr. Kan, fortified by these diagnoses, called the disease *Isi-meon-qu-mungwane* (Brandziekte or scab), 'called by the knob-nosed Kafirs eekwekwe.' Such medical reassurances, however, did not altogether console the municipal authorities of Kimberley, for they had private advices from a business friend at Klerksdorp that the 'disease is smallpox as we expected.' 'I gather from these letters,' said the Town Clerk dolefully, 'that it is pretty clear that the supply of labour will partially fail—at least for a time—which will be a great blow to the mining industry.'

The Transvaal authorities had succeeded in passing the trouble—whatever it was—over their border to Kimberley. Twenty-five boys had arrived at the mines from Pretoria through Klerksdorp.

The Kimberley Board of Health acted with decision. They sent the boys back to a farm called Felstead's, on their border, of which they made a quarantine station. Dr. Smith, who was put in charge of the station, reported what he took to be a case of chicken-pox among his prisoners, but was 'unable to pronounce definitely.'

Every native from the north was now being stopped at Felstead's. Mr. Denis Doyle, the Sanitary Inspector, reported that he had lymph sufficient for 2000 cases if the worst came to the worst; Dr. Smith had 132 cases in quarantine, and reported one man to be dying. In the meantime Dr. Otto reported a case of smallpox at the De Beers Mine itself. If he was right, the enemy had leapt the ramparts.

Now began a sharp conflict of medical opinion that divided the doctors of Kimberley into two hostile camps. Dr. Matthews and Dr. Jameson paid a visit to Felstead's, and Dr. Matthews reported to the Mining Board: 'After minute examination I have no hesitation in saying that there is no case of smallpox existing at the station at the present time. With this opinion Dr. Jameson concurs.'

Some of the doctors agreed, some of them disagreed. One of them, Dr. Murphy, justified his patronymic by the ingenious compromise that the disease—whatever it was—was 'infectious and contagious to Kafirs but not to white men.' It was called by all manner of names from 'Kafir-pox pure and simple' to 'a disease allied to smallpox.' Dr. Jameson's diagnosis was given with rather less than his usual confidence—'a bullous disease allied to pemphigus.'

Having come to this decision, whether it was

right or wrong, wise or unwise, Jameson never wavered. The epidemic increased; in the two years during which it raged there were 2300 cases and 700 deaths; among Europeans there were 400 cases and 51 deaths; but Dr. Jameson adhered to his original diagnosis throughout, and 'a bullous disease allied to pemphigus' became a proverb in the camp. The diagnosis itself might be thought difficult to sustain, since pemphigus is a rare and sporadic malady, and here was a raging epidemic, yet in a general way Dr. Jameson's opinion was the opinion of half the doctors and the whole community. On December 6, 1883, a great public meeting was held at the Dutoitspan Club 'for the purpose of considering the consequences of the smallpox scare.' These consequences were forcibly expressed by Mr. Lionel Phillips. 'Ruin,' he said, amid the sympathetic murmurs of his brother claim-holders, 'stared us in the face.' He read a report from Dr. Crook that the patients were suffering from chicken-pox, lichen, syphilis, and other skin diseases, but 'not a single case of smallpox, and this I state most emphatically.' Dr. Jameson, he went on, amid renewed cheers, had added the words, 'I concur.' 'Here,' the speaker continued with more force than logic, 'was wood at £40 a load and likely to be £100. On Saturday we might have a starving population to support, which was a fact more dangerous even than smallpox.'

Whether such non-medical but cogent arguments influenced the mind of Dr. Jameson and his wing of the medical profession who shall say? They may have thought that, supposing it were smallpox, little was to be gained and a great deal was to be risked by calling it so. 'Varicella hemorrhagica.'

or 'pleuro-pneumonia' would serve as well and would not bring down upon the camp the awful consequences of quarantine. The camp, let us remember, was in a horridly vulnerable situation. It lived from day to day upon the activities of the poor Dutch and coloured transport drivers who brought in the twisted logs of mimosa or camel-doorn necessary to its existence. If they were stopped, the mining and pumping machinery would be brought to a stand, the mines must shut down and the place be ruined. An industry precariously financed on a speculative basis by doubting and timorous bankers might never recover from the blow.

Whatever his reasons, medical or non-medical, Jameson never budged. Dr. Hans Sauer, the leader of the other camp, fought him with spirit. There were cases both in the civil and criminal courts. There was, for example, the action against Dr. Wolff, the Acting Resident Surgeon of the Kimberley Hospital (of which Dr. Jameson was chief) for 'wrongfully and unlawfully failing and neglecting to report' an alleged case of smallpox. The Magistrate's verdict was against Dr. Wolff, in spite of Dr. Jameson's evidence, which was emphatic, but on appeal the judgment was reversed, upon technical grounds.<sup>1</sup> There was an action for libel by Sauer against Jameson and a cross-action for libel by Jameson against Sauer, the Court finding in the one case for Dr. Sauer and in the other for Dr. Jameson, and awarding each the same damages against the other. These cases were fought with a spirit and humour upon both sides which suggest the background of a mining camp enormously interested and

<sup>1</sup> *Kimberley Advertiser*, May 24, 1884; High Court of Griqualand Law Reports, vol. September to December 1884, p. 512.

intensely amused, with a sporting interest in the victory of its champion, 'Dr. Jim.' Then there was a charge of culpable homicide against Dr. Wolff (which was withdrawn), and a charge of assault against Dr. Sauer by the Secretary of the Divisional Council, an enthusiast for the no-smallpox theory. Further, there were debates in the Cape Parliament, Mr. Upington, then Prime Minister and Attorney-General, suggesting on the one side that the doctors had 'declared the disease was not smallpox lest the result should be injurious to the mining interest,' and Cecil Rhodes, then one of the two Members for Griqualand West, on the other side, protesting 'against these attacks on the character of medical men of the highest standing, who had suffered pecuniary loss through adherence to their convictions, whether these convictions were mistaken or not.'<sup>1</sup>

In all this storm of controversy we may admire at least Dr. Jameson's courage and the joy he manifestly took in the conflict. 'Why,' he asked the Court scornfully, in one of the many actions at law, 'does the Board of Health not fumigate me? I have been rubbing my hands over a smallpox patient and sitting on him.'

Disaster, at all events, was averted. The public were vaccinated as 'a precaution' against this disease of many aliases and divided adherents. The Cape Government in the end declared Kimberley to be an 'infected area'; but this sentence of medical ex-communication had not the effects which had been feared. The Kafirs, in particular, showed but little dread of the disease. They had recourse, indeed, to a native practice of direct inoculation which suggests

<sup>1</sup> *Cape Hansard*, July 4, 1884.

that the epidemic, whatever it was, had long been known to them. What the disease really was the author does not presume to say, although he might venture a layman's opinion from the mass of evidence adduced that whatever it was, it was not 'a bullous disease allied to pemphigus.'<sup>1</sup>

Yet to the biographer of Dr. Jameson, the medical side of the controversy is of less interest than the evidence of character it affords. Whatever may be thought of the Doctor's judgment in this matter, there is already no doubt of that gift of leadership, that sureness of himself, that power of swift courageous decision, which was later to lead to the triumph of Buluwayo and the disaster of Doornkop.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. M. Wanklyn, an eminent authority, says on this subject: 'For long smallpox has been known to present more difficulties in its detection than most diseases. That is partly because it is the most protean of all diseases, assuming a great variety of disguises, yet all the time remaining smallpox.'—*Morning Post*, April 6, 1922.

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW RHODES CAME TO KIMBERLEY

‘Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.’

#### I

MR. SEYMOUR FORT tells us that Jameson went to Kimberley in order to procure the means to pay for a course of study in the medical schools of Vienna. If this was his object it soon faded from his mind. He was caught and bound up in the high-pitched exhilarating life of the Mining Camp, of which he became not the leading doctor only, but the favourite companion, the popular hero. Everybody loved Jameson, the rough miners with whom he joked and whom he scolded like children; the ladies who never could get behind his defence of mocking irony; even the Jewish financiers liked him because he snapped his fingers in their faces and paid no reverence to their wealth. His devil-may-care manner suited this young and lawless community, the more, as it came to know him, because it covered a highly-trained, swiftly-appraising mind, and what was rarer in Kimberley—or anywhere else for that matter—a heart without any taint of self-seeking.

From the few family letters we possess of this period we gather that Jameson was still care-free and heart-whole, deeply absorbed in his medical work, with a kindly thought and a ready cheque-book for his family at home. On September 15,



1883, he writes to his brother Tom upon the death of their mother, and the letter makes mention of his 'very large practice,' and the financial help he is arranging for his artist brother, 'Midge.'

His mother, evidently, had a mother's dear thought for her son, for Jameson writes—and it is the nearest thing to tenderness to be found in any of his letters: 'Please keep for me the brooch mother mentions, as it is the only souvenir I have, though I don't suppose it will be put to the use she intended as far as I can see—never having felt the least inclined that way.'

Jameson indeed was never to marry; but he was already making a friendship which was to become as strong as a marriage bond—his friendship with that Cecil Rhodes whom we have already had occasion to mention more than once in the course of this narrative. How these two came together we do not know—which is a pity, since their meeting is of the first importance to our story and to the story of South Africa. Did the two men realise when they met that Destiny stood at their elbow? Did they strike immediately together with an illuminating spark like the two currents of electricity? Did each see in the other the complement of himself? Or did they—it seems more likely—come together insensibly as men would in such a camp, recognising from the first a common breeding and a common tradition, and testing each other's qualities in the incidents of everyday life—at the club, at poker-parties, by the bedside of a friend, on a hospital committee, in a mining accident, at an inquest, at a political election, in the great trial of the smallpox epidemic—in all these and other incidents and commonplaces of the life of the camp gradually testing and coming

to know each other, as intimately and as unconsciously as two boys at school ?

However the first meeting came about, it was to ripen, as we shall see, into so intimate a friendship, with results so important, that it becomes necessary at this stage for the biographer of Jameson to digress into the life, character, and activities of Cecil Rhodes.

The two young men were much of an age, Jameson being the elder by five months. They both belonged to families of eleven, and were both of good British stock. But there the resemblance ended. Jameson, as we have seen, was a Scot ; Rhodes was an Englishman, the son of a Hertfordshire vicar, and true to English country type ; blue-eyed, fair-haired ; in his youth shy and dutiful, somewhat solemn, full of reverie, given to earnest talk, but breaking out now and then into bursts of high-pitched boyish laughter. As a boy of fifteen he had confided to his Aunt Sophy that he would like to be a barrister and ' next to that I think a clergyman's life is the nicest . . . and a college education is necessary for both,' adding the quaint reflection, ' I think that as a barrister a man may be just as good a Christian as in any other profession.' At seventeen he had rather ' overgrown his strength,' and as he obstinately refused to enter the Church, his family yielded to his desire to travel. Herbert, his eldest brother, a rover by nature, was at that time in the infant Colony of Natal, engaged in the hopeful experiment of cotton-growing, and there Cecil followed him in the middle of the year 1870, with for capital a sum of £2000, which this same Aunt Sophy had lent him.

When Cecil arrived in Natal he found that his brother Herbert was far in the interior, diamond

hunting; and at Dr. Sutherland's<sup>1</sup> hospitable table he met Rolleston,—‘the great man just returned from the Diamond-Fields, who found the big diamond and many others.’ ‘Everybody,’ he continued, in a letter home, ‘starts for the Fields in about three weeks. They have been waiting for the grass. To hear Rolleston talk and to see his diamonds makes one’s mouth water.’ And Cecil goes on to tell of three ‘whoppers, one worth £8000, another £10,000 and another £9000. The man who found the £10,000 diamond offered his claim for 15s. the evening before, and no one would buy it.’

‘Everybody’s head is turned by diamonds,’ said Cecil, and it was true; almost the whole Colony of Natal was trekking away through the mountains to the West, and it says much for Cecil’s steadiness that for almost a whole year he refused to be drawn from the laborious business of cotton-growing—fighting the aphis, the bore worm and the aboriginal bush in the broiling Valley of the Umkomas. We get an engaging picture of the boy from these early letters, sometimes ‘very busy down at the river making bricks to build a cotton-house . . . in shirt and trousers, with more holes than patches’; or stubbing the cotton flats—‘awful work stumping . . . the bush is just as thick as Shorley Wood and every root and stump has to be taken out,’ or thatching the house; or exploring the mountain ravines—‘It was one immense natural fernery, and there, hundreds of feet below us, stretched out the whole valley with our huts looking like specks, and in the distance hills rising one above the other with a splendid blue tint on them.’

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sutherland was Surveyor-General of Natal, and was a father to all the young colonists of Natal, but especially to his favourite, Cecil Rhodes.

He goes into every detail of cotton growing, cotton picking, cotton selling, the management of Zululand, the price of land, the seasons, the balance-sheet of the plantation with a thoroughness and competence amazing in a lad of seventeen. He has already, it is plain, a sense for the strategy of business. Thus he relates his plans for the buying of a 'small, three-cornered bit of land' which 'commands the river frontage and is the keystone of the whole farm'; or he lends Kafirs money to pay their hut-tax, because 'if you lend it them, they will come and work it out . . . and Kafirs are really safer than the Bank of England.' Cecil Rhodes the man, it is clear, is budding in Cecil Rhodes the boy.

We can see him, in these letters, struggling manfully against the temptation of the River Diggings:—

'Of course,' he writes, 'there is a chance of the diamonds turning out trumps; but I don't count much from them. You see it is all chance. Herbert may not find one or he may find one of a hundred carats: it is a toss up. But the cotton, the more you see of it, the more I am sure it is a reality. Not a fortune, and not attainable by every one; but still, to one who has a good bit of land, money to start it properly, a fair road, and above all, a good name amongst the Kafirs, a very handsome income.'

And yet ' . . . I heard of a fellow who offered his claim for 15s. the preceding night, the next morning went down and turned out a 70 carat in the first shovelful,' or ' . . . a Dutchman who trekked in, outspanned, found a diamond worth £14,000, inspanned and trekked out all in one day.'

He waits for the cotton harvest, bales his cotton and gins some of it, and then he goes; up and over

these hills 'with the splendid blue tint on them.' He would ride over the mountains with one Kafir on horseback; two white neighbours were going. 'We shall take a few biscuits, tea and sugar, and I think I shall put that wonderful box of lozenges in my pocket, which my father sent me. . . .'

This letter of July 16, 1871, last of the series, must have been written just before he started, and one can see the tall, lean, fair-haired English lad threading his way up through the forest-clad Drakensberg, a peaceable young Conquistador with treasure shining in his eyes, and emerging at last upon the boundless plains and rolling downs of the high veld. When he arrived in Griqualand West the 'dry diggings' of Dutoitspan had just been discovered, and his brother Herbert had pegged out a claim in Colesberg Kopje, which was to become the Kimberley Mine.

Herbert was a rover by nature; he left the claim very much to Cecil's management, and at last trekked far away into the interior, to the gold diggings of Pilgrim's Rest in the Northern Transvaal, and still farther on, until at last he found a hunter's grave on the banks of the Shire River in the depths of Central Africa.<sup>1</sup> But Cecil remained.

The energy and thought which we have seen in his cotton-growing he now devoted to this new and stranger business of diamond-mining. It was, certainly, a problem worth thinking over. 'By November 1871,' says Paton, 'from £40,000 to £50,000 worth of diamonds were taken from Colesberg Kopje alone, and the best claims were worth

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt to death (1879). Before he died he sent for Dr. Jane Waterston, then a medical missionary higher up the river. Unfortunately she arrived too late to be of assistance. See *Kimberley Daily Independent*, Feb. 27, 1880.

£4000 a-piece. The hole was rapidly becoming enormous—a deepening and ever more unmanageable chaos of separate workings. And although nearly everybody expected to reach the bottom very soon, no bottom had yet been found. Was there a bottom or did it perhaps go down into the centre of the earth—unfathomable, inexhaustible?

It was a thing to ponder over, and that Cecil Rhodes was already pondering one gathers from the impressions of friends at this time. 'As I search my memory,' says one, 'for the Rhodes of the early 'seventies, I seem to see a fair young man frequently sunk in deep thought, his hands buried in his trousers pockets, his legs crossed and possibly twisted together, quite oblivious of the talk around him.'<sup>1</sup> 'After dinner,' says Mr. Scully, 'it was his wont to lean forward with both elbows on the table and his mouth slightly open. He had a habit when thinking of rubbing his chin gently with his forefinger. Very often he would sit in the attitude described for a very long time, without joining in whatever conversation happened to be going on.'

We get other sketches of him, dressed in shrunken cricketing flannels, reddened by the red dust of the veld, a tall, slim, fair youth with aquiline features, blue eyes and wavy hair—'damnable like an Englishman'—as one Boer said of him; often leaning against a wall, his hands in his pockets, and often sitting on an inverted bucket for hours together, gazing down into the depths of the mine.

<sup>1</sup> See chapter v. of *Michell's Life*. The author of the admirable sketch there given is probably Mr. Norman Garstin.

## II

This moody and abstracted youth was in fact planning great schemes, enormous projects, more fantastic than anything that could be imagined—except the reality under his eyes. He saw incredible wealth opening out below him in the depth of the pit, wealth as marvellous as ever appeared to the bewildered eyes of Sinbad the Sailor when the roc dropped him down into the glittering valley. In the spring of 1872 the claims of Herbert Rhodes were considered to be worth £4000 if put up to auction. But such an estimate was nothing, a mere chance valuation of a surface claim; Cecil, pondering upon the problem till the eye of his imagination pierced its depths, drank in with increasing wonder all the consequences of his great speculation, his daring thought—what if there might be no bottom to the mine?

Therefore he was resolved: he would command these claims, he would become master of them all. Then he would be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. But what would he do with his wealth? Ah, there he had his ideas. What were they? We shall see.

We gather that he was influenced in these dreams by a remarkable journey undertaken by the two brothers, Herbert and Cecil, in 1872. At the beginning of that year—and even before—rumours were drifting down to Kimberley of discoveries of gold in the north. Some travellers, following in the footsteps of David Livingstone, had found great and ancient workings round Tati in Matabeleland; others, striking north from Pretoria, had washed out gold in the mountainous country round the headwaters of the Limpopo. The former gold-fields were

guarded, like the apples of the Hesperides, by a fearsome dragon, the Matabele; but the latter lay in a country that had been *schoonegemaakt*, which is to say, cleared, by the Boer pioneers. Edward Button went up there in 1869, with an Australian digger called Sutherland, and found gold at Marabastad to the eastward of Makapanpoort in the Northern Transvaal. Button sent some of his specimens to Cecil's friend Dr. Sutherland in Natal, and Thomas Baines, who visited Marabastad in December 1871, mentions that 'he was fortunate enough to see some very beautiful specimens of gold quartz' which were already packed (by Button) to be sent to the Diamond Fields.

Herbert Rhodes, always in love with adventure, probably saw this quartz when it arrived, and he persuaded Cecil to join him in an expedition to those realms of gold. Thus early the hand of Cecil's destiny already pointed to the north.

Cecil borrowed a wagon from their friend, Mr. W. C. Scully, and Herbert and Cecil set off together from the Diamond Diggings, leaving their brother Frank, the sunny-minded, the debonair, fresh from his triumphs on the playing-fields of Eton, who had come out from England to pay his brothers a visit, to look after their claims while they were away.<sup>1</sup>

This journey gave the boy of nineteen—for Cecil was no more—his first view of the gateways of that vast 'North' which he was afterwards to make his own. From Kimberley to Marabastad is a matter of four hundred miles. The first part of the road

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. C. Scully, whom I saw on this point, was under the impression that Herbert went and Cecil stayed behind; but there he is wrong. Mr. Hutchinson, *Frank Rhodes: a Memoir* (privately printed), evidently quoting from family letters, is definite on the point (p. 9) and there is independent evidence. See also Mr. Scully's *Reminiscences*.



lay through Griqualand West, a territory recently annexed to the British Empire. But at Potchefstroom or thereabouts the wagon passed into the Transvaal Republic, and must have proceeded by way of Pretoria through the Magaliesbergen—the ‘Cashan Mountains’ of Livingstone’s *Travels*. They travelled slowly through vast regions of tawny grass, starred at wide intervals with the rude homesteads of the Boer voor-trekkers, and took their toilsome way up through the mountains by Potgieter’s Rust to Moordenaar’s Drift—where every stone spoke of a wild history, if they had only known it, of forays, reprisals, wars and massacres.

Cecil had abundant leisure to talk with these Boer pioneers—long-haired and long-bearded, riding their little ponies, with rifles slung over their shoulders—or over coffee and a pipe on their stoep of an evening. For a journey by ox-wagon is a dawdling way to travel. It goes a snail’s pace day by day—unhasting but not unresting, and all sense of time is lost in the dust of the slow feet of the oxen through these large wildernesses.

The ox-wagon, in which both Rhodes and Jameson were destined to spend a large part of their lives, is, if for that reason alone, worthy our passing consideration. It is itself the peculiar creation of the South African veld—strong, supple, durable, not merely a house upon wheels, as it is crudely called, but something more—a fortress and a hammock, a contrivance that can be slung down precipices and hoisted over mountains, and can take its lurching way with a minimum of jar and jolt over rocks and ant-heaps and through steep and stony drifts. ‘The principal and very important advantage of the Cape-built wagon,’ says Burchell, ‘consists in its sides, bottom,

and carriage not being joined together . . . thereby admitting each part to play freely. The *agter-stel* and *voor-stel* (that is to say, fore and after parts of the under-carriage) are in their movements independent of each other, being held together only by the *lang-wagen* (a strong wooden beam), which by its joint moves either way. The sides resting on the *skammels*, lean against the *rongs* and are united to the tilt only by the ribs, which are elastic and yield to every motion. . . . The bolt on which the fore axle turns is not riveted nor pinned through, by which means it is at liberty to draw out a little upwards to relieve the rocking of the wagon when any one of the wheels is much lifted up by a hillock or other unevenness of the ground.'<sup>1</sup> Thus cunningly built to avoid straining or cracking the Cape wagon takes its way over the open country.

So Cecil travelled for weeks and months on end. As they approached their destination they passed through 'a beautiful and undulating country studded here and there with mimosa groves, and showing glimpses of white quartz through the verdant herbage.' There in 'a deep gully of rich brown soil,' they saw the 'small rill' dammed up to contain water, the cradles and the 'broad grassy valley,' with the holes side by side like newly-made graves whence the two ounces of gold which made such a stir in Pretoria had been gotten.

There was already a small community of diggers at work among those wild ravines, a community as Ishmaelite and self-contained as the diamond-diggers of Griqualand West, and the seeds of trouble

<sup>1</sup> *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*, by William J. Burchell, 2 vols. (1822), vol. i. p. 148 *et seq.* Of all South African books of travel—and they are many and good—Burchell is the best.

between Boer and Briton were already being so. For Baines tells us that a Committee of Diggers, with Mr. Button in the chair, was held as early as December 9, 1871, and its first resolution suggests the opening of a conflict of race—of which we shall hear much later—‘That all business and correspondence be conducted in English.’<sup>1</sup>

But that great trouble was for the future: Marabastad when the two brothers reached it was already a ‘wash-out,’ and the diggers were talking of another rush to Leydenburg farther to the south.

So Herbert and Cecil retraced their steps, and after a long pilgrimage of about four months found themselves back at Colesberg Kopje with a very much damaged wagon and a working knowledge of the North-Western Transvaal.

When Cecil made this journey he was nineteen—an impressionable age—and he spoke of it often, as if the thoughts burnt and baked in his mind in those sunny leisurely days of early travel had fixed the course of his after-life. ‘For four months’—so he told Miss Flora Shaw (now Lady Lugard) who told the present writer—‘I walked between earth and sky, and when I looked down I said this earth should be English, and when I looked up I said that the English should rule this earth.’<sup>2</sup>

It is curious to think of the wagon with its train of oxen, toiling slowing over these endless plains, and the slim, blue-eyed, fair-haired, ‘damnably English’ youth in dusty flannels, walking alongside, brooding upon the growing purpose of his life.

It was here too that he drew up the first of those characteristic documents, his wills. This one was

<sup>1</sup> These quotations are from the *Travels* of Thomas Baines.

The words do not sound like Rhodes, but the sentiment is Rhodesian.

written on the side of a portmanteau, as he sat on the veld, and the crumpled piece of paper on which he wrote it was pierced by the buckles. He left the wealth of which he was to die possessed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in trust for the extension of the British Empire.

These precautions against death suggest the growing purpose of his life—a life already dedicated. But to that purpose he must educate himself: he must leave his business in good hands while he kept his terms in Oxford. A partner offered in C. D. Rudd, a young Englishman of his own class whom he had come to know in Natal. With Rudd he undertook contracts—to pump the water out of the diamond mine at De Beers was the most important—and in the spring of 1873 we find him leaving the affairs of the partnership in Rudd's hands when he set out for England. In October 1873 he entered at Oriel, and so began an amazing, an almost incredible, double life; at Kimberley in vacation fighting on equal terms with the keenest business intellects that the world could produce for the mastery of the diamond industry, and in term time reverting to the care-free life of the English undergraduate. His letters written from Oxford and London to his partner have been partly published by Mr. Basil Williams. They are the most extraordinary mixture of the ingenuous undergraduate and the precocious business man it is possible to imagine—largely taken up with details of the pumping machinery which he was buying and sending out; a discussion of the effect of a political crisis on the price of diamonds; then an account of an investment in Hampstead House property as a nest-egg if the diamond mines should fail; then a discussion of the best type of

ice-machine (for the firm of Rudd and Rhodes is making ice in Kimberley); and then—'My dons and I have had some tremendous skirmishes. I was nearly caught going to Epsom; but still I do not think that I shall be sent down. The change at first was rather odd.' And lastly:—

'I would in conclusion say, do not plunge for much more at the Fields. We have a sufficient block at De Beers to make a fortune if diamonds last and have enough property in Kimberley. If we make more money I would sooner say lend it or go in for a nest-egg at home, and by all means try and spare me for two years and you will find I shall be twice as good a speculator with a profession at my back.

'I will be reading hard all the summer. If you want more pumps say so, but I have gone over in my mind all the pumps and, barring a stronger pump to drive with wire in gorges, I cannot think where it is needed. They are expensive things; the tenders for 5000 gallons to 250 feet with gear, etc., have been £115 and £140, which means about £230 up at Fields.'<sup>1</sup>

A queer letter—it will be allowed! But Cecil was, as he sometimes described himself, a 'queer fellow.'

Rhodes, we know, was back in Kimberley on a short visit during the Long Vacation of 1876; in 1877 he kept all his terms; and it was at the beginning of 1877—according to Mr. W. T. Stead—that he wrote a curious 'draft of some of my ideas.'<sup>2</sup>

'It often strikes a man,' says this youth of twenty-

<sup>1</sup> This letter is dated June 1, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes*. The 'draft' was said by Rhodes to have been written when he was twenty-two years of age; but Stead dated it as at the beginning of 1877 from a reference to the Russo-Turkish War, which began in that year.

four, 'to inquire what is the chief good in life: to one the thought comes that it is a happy marriage; to another great wealth; and as each seizes on the idea, for that he more or less works for the rest of his existence. To myself, thinking over the same question, the wish came to me to be useful to my country.'

Then he goes on: 'I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race. I contend that every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence. Added to this, the absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars.'

What, then, he asks himself, are the objects for which he should work? And he replies to his own question: 'The furtherance of the British Empire for the bringing of the whole uncivilised world under British rule, for the recovery of the United States, for the making of the Anglo-Saxon race but one Empire.'

'What a dream!' he adds, 'but yet it is possible.'

Cecil went to Kimberley for the Long Vacation, and Sir Charles Warren gives a quaint glimpse of him:—

'It was on the Kimberley coach on August 3, 1877. Rhodes, who sat opposite to me, was engaged in getting something up by heart, so I offered to hear him. It was the Thirty-Nine Articles of our Christian faith. We got on very well until we arrived at the article on Predestination, and there we stuck. He had his views and I had mine, and our fellow-passengers were greatly amused at the topic

of our conversation—for several hours being on this one subject.’<sup>1</sup>

On September 19 of this same year—1877—at Kimberley he drew up another will, leaving all his worldly wealth ‘to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and to Sidney Godolphin Alexander Ship-pard’ (then Attorney-General of Griqualand West), giving them full authority to use the same for the purpose of extending British rule throughout the world, and other kindred purposes. And a friend of those early days, Joseph Orpen, told the present writer that about this time young Rhodes asked him and some other friends to dinner, and at dessert in a curiously shy and solemn manner made a little speech. He thought it right, he said, for every man, at the beginning of his life, to put an aim before him, and for his part he meant to work for the British Empire.

Such was the undergraduate Rhodes. ‘I went with him,’ says a friend in 1877, ‘to a wine, and was amused to notice how much older in manner the other undergraduates were than Cecil. They were full of that spurious wisdom assumed by many young men as a defensive armour, an armour he did not require.’

This double life, to which no career of which the writer has knowledge furnishes any parallel, lasted until 1881, when Rhodes took his degree. On November 26 of that year he wrote to Rudd from Oxford, and the letter is all about the diamond companies then being floated in London. They are, he says, ‘wrong from first. Wrong men started them here, wrong ground has been

<sup>1</sup> *On the Veldt in the 'Seventies*, by Sir Charles Warren.

put in, and wrong results have been the consequence.' It is evident that Rhodes's mind was then busily at work upon the first great campaign of his life, the Amalgamation of the Diamond Mines.



## CHAPTER V

### THE CONSOLIDATION

'Some people have a fancy for this thing and some for that.'

BARNBY BARNATO.

IN one of his letters to his mother Rhodes compared a diamond mine to a Stilton cheese, and we have elaborated that comparison by imagining our cheese divided in chequer-board fashion among owners who must eat their squares without encroaching upon the squares of their neighbours. The thing looks simple at first, but as they go down into the cheese it becomes more difficult, until in the end it becomes impossible. For the squares of varying depths crumble down upon one another, and the rind, becoming rotten, falls down into the middle. The point of impossibility is reached when the owners, despairing of working their claims from above, tunnel down below and bring ruin upon their neighbours in a dark chaos of underground working.

So indeed it fell out, or fell in, with these four diamond mines. As the diggers went down, it was forced upon their sturdily obstinate minds that willy-nilly they must combine. Governor Southey had seen it from the beginning, but public opinion lagged behind. Originally 1 claim 30 feet square was the limit of ownership; 3 claims were allowed a little later; by Ordinance 10 of 1874 the ownership of 10 claims was permitted to 1 person or joint-stock company, and by the end of 1876 (Ordinance 12

of November 20) this restriction was swept away and the mines were thrown open to any combination of ownership.

These changes in the system of ownership were not due to the machinations of wicked capitalists, as some people suppose, but to the hard lessons of necessity. By 1872 the famous roads of the Kimberley Mine had crumbled into the pit and it had become an open quarry 1000 feet in length and 60 feet in width, surrounded by timber staging and covered by a monstrous cobweb of iron ropes. By 1874 the falls and slides of reef and the flooding of claims had forced the diggers to organise a Mining Board; but this Board—an elected and democratic body—had neither the power nor the means to cope with the outraged law of gravity. They attempted both to drain the water and clear away the falls; but ruin worked faster than repair. By 1878 more than a quarter of the surface of Kimberley Mine was covered by fallen reef. By 1881 the expenditure of the Mining Board had risen to over £2,000,000. By March 1883 it had a debit balance of £250,000, and the local bank refused to extend its overdraft. The Board in fact was bankrupt. The pit was now over 400 feet deep, the sides fell in almost continuously, and in 1883  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million loads of reef were brought to the surface against only 350,000 loads of blue ground. In November of that year an enormous fall piled a mass of shale half across the chasm. Only about 50 claims could be regularly worked; they paid handsomely, but the mine taken as a whole was ruined. Then a mining engineer, Edward Jones, sank a shaft of timber frame through the rubble, and reached blue ground. About the same time shafts were sunk by the Central Company

and the French Company through the rock outside the mine so as to approach the diamond-bearing soil from the flank. The era of subterranean mining had begun.

The other mines followed a similar course. The Mining Board of De Beers, which, by the way, did not go into debt, attempted to cut the rock back in terraces, and, for a time, stopped serious falls; but in 1885 nearly five million cubic feet of rubbish fell upon the claims and stopped work for six months, and by 1887 open pit working was abandoned. In March 1886 a great fall in Dutoitspan killed eight white men and ten Kafirs, and by 1887 the bottom of Bultfontein Mine was covered with fallen reef.

Such a history points to the conclusion that diamond mining could only be carried on by strong combinations of capital holding large blocks of claims. And this was exactly what happened. The original claims in the four mines numbered in all 3600; by 1885 there were 98 separate holdings. The Kimberley Mine had shrunk from 470 to 11 companies and 8 private holdings; the De Beers from 622 to 7 companies and 3 private holdings; Dutoitspan from 1441 to 16 companies and 21 private holdings, and Bultfontein from 1067 claims to 8 companies and 24 private holdings.

Obviously it could not end there; a hundred separate organisations quarrying, burrowing, and tunnelling hundreds of feet under a superficial area of less than 70 acres was a hopeless proposition. And there was another factor which made equally for consolidation—the diamond market. As the consolidation proceeded and the underground workings increased production, the supply of diamonds was in constant danger of exceeding the demand.

One mine alone could produce sufficient stones to supply the markets, and if every mine were consolidated as a separate unit and all sold their finds in competition the diamond market would be glutted and the industry faced by periodic spells of ruination.

Such, then, was the natural pressure towards Consolidation. Let us now see how it was brought about. All the separate little interests clung desperately to their own holdings and their own prejudices, jealousies, and rivalries. It was necessary both to persuade and to enforce, and both in force and in persuasion Rhodes was the appointed instrument.

He began, as we have seen, working his brother's claim on the Kimberley Mine. Why did he go over to De Beers? Probably because ground was cheaper. In Colesberg Kopje, which is to say the New Rush, or the Kimberley Mine, prices soared from day to day. A narrow strip of ground—a mere slice of a claim—would be £50 to-day, £100 to-morrow, and unobtainable at any price the day after. Rhodes was a man of small resources, and he meant to lay them out for the great end he had in view. Now the De Beers Mine was larger by 150 claims than the Kimberley Mine; but it was greatly obstructed by a bank of floating reef, which sloped down through the blue ground at an angle of 45 degrees. One part of the mine this reef overhung, another part rested upon it. The ground which the reef overhung was called Baxter's Gully; it was rich but was perpetually threatened by the reef above it; on the other side lay Poor Man's Gully, so called because it was both cheap and easy to work. No reef overhung it; but it was of a depth limited by the sloping reef underneath.

There were other regions in the mine, some poor and some rich; all in all, it was close on 14 acres originally covered by 622 claims.

Such was De Beers which Rhodes set out to amalgamate as the first part of his great plan. In 1873 we find him uniting his claims with those of C. D. Rudd, and in 1874 these two were joined by Robert Graham. They held claims in Baxter's Gully where Stow and English were also digging. In the meantime Compton had been working a piece of ground which lay in Poor Man's Gully just over the floating reef. Compton reached the reef, and his neighbours confidently predicted his ruin; but he cut his way through its 30 feet of thickness, and at last reached the rich ground on the Baxter's Gully side. Stow and English thereupon took him into partnership, and the firm continued as Stow, English, and Compton. Rudd, Rhodes, and Graham joined forces with Stow, English, and Compton, and formed together a band of brothers with a common purpose—to consolidate De Beers.

The De Beers Mining Company, as it became on April 1, 1880, had a capital of £200,000 and consisted in the main of these six men, led upon a common plan by Cecil Rhodes. They met in a little building not far from the mine to arrange operations and report progress. Each had his task on the mine or in the office; and each also was deputed to buy ground in a separate direction, their object being to get an interest in the various companies and private firms which now composed the mine, for by this time the individual digger was extinct—crushed flat by the difficulties of falling reef.

Thus, for example, if Rudd was buying an interest

in Schwabe's Gully, Stow would be doing nothing in Schwabe's but would be buying in the Elma Company, and English would be operating somewhere else. They bought at the open market price, and all brought their purchases to the pool at the price which they gave for them—never selling even for a profit. None but themselves ever knew the plan of campaign ; and they could trust one another absolutely.

They had to work with strict economy, for time and again they were almost overwhelmed by floating reef. But working together they had this advantage, that when the reef fell they could concentrate upon it all their tackle, and all their boys, and clear the ground so as to have a good spell of the blue ground before another fall came down. They used well every penny they had ; there was a time when Rudd and Rhodes could have bought the whole mine for £6000, but dared not risk the purchase. When the De Beers Company was formed, Rhodes drew a cheque for £5 ' as an advance against his salary as secretary.'

By March 1885 this little band of Englishmen, thus working together, had secured the bulk of the mine.

The *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of May 7, 1885, points out that during the year the London and South African, the Independent, and the Baxter's Gully Company, as well as three other blocks of claims, had become incorporated with the De Beers Company, thus increasing the total number of their claims to 360.

In these growing financial deals Rhodes found counsel and support in the financial genius of Alfred Beit, who first came to the Fields in 1875, as diamond-

buyer for the firm of Lippert of Hamburg and Port Elizabeth; then started on his own account, and ultimately joined forces with Julius Wernher of the French firm of Jules Porges and Company. If Rhodes was the Bismarck, Beit was the Moltke of this extraordinary campaign.

By 1886 the community of Kimberley was thoroughly awake to the importance of amalgamation, or unification as it was now called, and was decidedly against it. It appears that Mr. John X. Merriman and a Mr. Moulle had come up to Kimberley to negotiate a unification on behalf of a European syndicate with ten millions sterling of capital, calling itself the Unified Mines Company.

On January 30 a great meeting was called to discuss the Unification Scheme, the Mayor of Kimberley presiding, and Mr. J. J. O'Leary tabled a series of very ponderous resolutions against the project. Were they, the speakers asked, to turn the Diggings into a second Namaqualand, and make of Kimberley a deserted village, and hand the control of their industry over to a body of men 6000 miles away? Never!

They wanted the good days of the digger back again. If every man could not have his own claim, let every man have his own ground. Let the Government buy the mine, work the mine, and sell the ground to the individual digger, who would sort the stuff and find the stones. Then the good old days would come again.

Mr. Merriman wrote eloquently, but in vain, on the benefits of unification and the ruinous waste of the competitive system. Press and public were against him. 'People only wish,' said the local paper, 'to see such a scheme wrecked.' Neverthe

less it marked the alarming tendency towards amalgamation. In the Kimberley Mine 1500 holdings at the top had decreased by more than half 100 feet down, and at the present depth of 400 feet there were not ten *bona fide* holders. The same thing had gone on at De Beers. It was useless to shut their eyes to the facts. Let them rather try by reasonable action to prevent anything more than the amalgamation of each mine into one, two, or three Companies.

And then, on February 10, Cecil Rhodes published his famous 'proposals' concerning amalgamation, addressed to the De Beers Mining Company. The document is not an argument for amalgamation, but a plan of campaign. As a basis of valuation he proposed the yield of the highest class of claims in each mine, and on this basis: 'I propose you should ask from your shareholders the power to issue scrip in exchange for that of some of the other principal Companies in the four mines.'

Here, then, was a practical scheme; it did not mean complete amalgamation, but it was sufficient to regulate output, and would, therefore, strengthen and steady the diamond market. Rhodes presented the scheme, not merely in principle, but in all its details, supported by a cogent citation of pertinent facts and figures.

The plan was discussed at a special general meeting of the Company on April 7, 1886. Rhodes himself was in the chair, and made a very skilful speech. There had been, he reminded the meeting, 'an attempt to carry the whole four mines home,' but here was a scheme by which the industry would be retained locally: 'If we acquire an influence on the basis proposed in Companies in the other mines



no sale of any mine can occur to an English Syndicate without our consent.'

The speech is of particular interest because Rhodes spoke openly of the great danger which he saw ahead. He had no great fear of Bultfontein or Dutoitspan, but 'supposing Kimberley Mine became one Corporation, and it was being worked as such, but not working with us, it would be a very serious danger to our Company.' Therefore, they must try to acquire a large holding in the Central Kimberley Mine. Thus it is clear that in Rhodes's mind the idea of amalgamating, not merely De Beers, but all the mines, had already taken shape.

The Rhodes plan was adopted, and Rhodes was put in command of £300,000 to carry out his scheme. And the meeting of May 6, 1887, shows the amalgamation of De Beers Mine practically complete. Rhodes gives a triumphant account of the last stages of the work. They had bought the Elma, in which Alfred Beit's firm was the chief interest, for £105,000, half in shares and half in blue ground. They had also bought the Gem and the Oriental Company, the latter to prevent its amalgamation with the Victoria Company, their strongest remaining rival, for if the Victoria had secured the Oriental 'it would have strengthened the Victoria to such an extent that perhaps we should not have agreed to any terms of amalgamation.'

At the same time they had been secretly buying Victoria shares. For they felt that 'the only way we could deal with them was by obtaining such a large interest in the Company that they must look upon us as one of themselves.' They had done it very cleverly through Alfred Beit. Beit and Porges had opened a joint account with them, and they

had quietly been buying shares in the Victoria Company in London: 'We felt that if they bought in the London market it would excite no remark, whereas if our Directors entered into competition it would become known at once that the De Beers Company were buying, and our object would be rendered impracticable.' On this joint account they had together bought 6000 shares at the best possible terms—at a little below £20 a share.

And then: 'In pursuance of our policy of amalgamation, we at last thought the time had arrived to inform the Victoria that we were their largest shareholders.'

It is noteworthy that while this speech of 1887 deals with the amalgamation of De Beers it ends with the larger idea: 'The High Court,' he said, 'has limited our ambition, and will not allow us to wander into other mines. But we preserve the hope that by union and co-operation with other mines in times when the market becomes depressed and diamonds become unsaleable, by promoting such friendly and harmonious co-operation as is possible, we shall place the diamond industry in a position in which it shall not be at the mercy of the buyers, but the buyers shall be under the control of the producers.'

By 1887 the work was practically done; De Beers Mine was under one control; its capital closely represented the actual value of the properties at the time when they were taken over, but the result of the consolidation was to add enormously to these values. It was a position of great strength, and it was commanded by one man.

And now Rhodes, drawing a long breath, turned his gaze upon the Kimberley Mine. It was the common boast of the men and Companies who

owned that mine that the Kimberley was worth three of De Beers, and its leading spirit, Barney Barnato, was determined to beat his rival out of the market.

Barney Barnato, like Cecil Rhodes, had come to Kimberley young and in the wake of a brother. But whereas Rhodes had come as a digger, Barney had come as a diamond-dealer of the genus known as kopje-walloper. It is unfortunate for Barney's memory that an early partner in these activities, one Louis Cohen, has written a book mainly about him. The book, it must be said, is more amusing than truthful. I do not know if it is safe even to quote from it, for one enraged millionaire, Sir J. B. Robinson, has obtained an injunction against it. Dr. Jameson, whom the book even more grossly libelled, listened to it being read aloud with joyous chuckles, particularly the part which referred to himself. It may be just worth remarking that Robinson, as Chairman of the Diamond Protection Association, and Member for Griqualand West, had a main hand in passing the I.D.B. Act.

Barney was not the illiterate that Cohen made him out to be. He must have had a fair education at the Hebrew Free School in Spitalfields, then under a celebrated pedagogue, Moses Angel, and although he left at the age of fourteen, he continued his education in the London theatres, and knew every part that Henry Irving played by heart. We have only to read Barnato's financial speeches to see that he was a man of more than a natural talent. The turn of his sentences shows that he had been accustomed to hear if not to read or speak good English.

Barney Barnato's true name was Barnett Isaacs, and he was the son of a Jewish dealer in Aldgate. His elder brother, Henry Isaacs, the first to leave

the nest, was in Kimberley as early as 1871—leading a highly-variegated life as bar-tender, chucker-out, boxer, and conjurer. Now it is a foible of public entertainers to take names which have both an Italian and an alliterative sound, and it was for this reason, and not because a pseudonym was considered an advantage in the diamond dealing business, that Harry took the name of Barnato. And what more natural than that his brother Barnett, when he entered the camp in his brother's footsteps, should be dubbed with his brother's name?

Thus Barney came to be called Barnato. He arrived in the fields in the latter part of 1873, and Louis Cohen asserts that the joint capital of the firm of Cohen and Barnato amounted to £30 and forty boxes of doubtful cigars. Their business at first was to thread their way over the kopjes, among the tables and the tents in search of diggers ready to sell their finds on the spot. At night they slept together in a small hut on a single bed, struggling on cold nights for the lion's share of the blankets. 'Barney knew me better than any man,' says Cohen, 'and would have done anything for me in the world bar give me a sixpence.'

Barnato had pluck and shrewd business instinct. 'There is nothing,' he once said, 'this country produces that I have not traded in, from diamonds and gold right away through feathers, wool, and mealies to garden vegetables.' He was soon in partnership with his brother, and from 1874 to 1880 the brothers worked day and night to gather money for future operations—all day keenly at work in the office or among the claims, all the evening and greater part of the night passing from one place of resort to

another, from one bar to another, joining in every conversation and every drink, keeping thoroughly abreast of everything that was going on.<sup>1</sup>

Poor Barney ! He was successful in his great end of money-getting, and yet, as appears from his life, he was not altogether happy. He had money but he had not reputation—and there, perhaps, lay his sorrow. Why Kimberley refused to entertain a high opinion of him we can only guess. Upon the evidence, as already hinted, we must acquit him of any share in the ‘common crime,’ for a man is innocent until he is proved guilty. But it came near to him—near enough for the censorious.<sup>2</sup>

Such, then, was Rhodes’s rival—an Oriental, cunning, quick, emotional, mercurial, unabashed, and yet by all accounts good-hearted, with an art to turn all things to gold—and yet with a scruple to turn all gold to dross—for in the end poor Barney drowned himself.

By 1876 he had contrived to save £3000, which he invested in a block of four claims in the Kimberley Mine. These claims paid beyond expectation, bringing in a steady income of £1800 a week. In 1880 he went to England and established the firm of Barnato Brothers, diamond dealers and financiers, and, at the end of the year, floated his claims as the Barnato Diamond Mining Company for £115,000. This Company at first paid 36 per cent. per annum, but became involved in heavy falls of reef. Barnato met this by amalgamation. He joined with the Standard Company, bought Stewart’s claims and joined forces with the Kimberley Central. At the stage when Rhodes’s amalgamation of De Beers

<sup>1</sup> *Barnato*. A Memoir by Harry Raymond, 1897, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Argus* libel case tried in Cape Town on May 4 and 5, 1885.

was completed Barnato controlled the greater part of the Kimberley Mine.

But there were several important exceptions. The French Company in particular held a line of claims running across the mine from north to south and dividing the holdings of the Central Company. It also held some claims from which this central line was separated by the intervening claims of the Central Company. When Rhodes appeared on the scene these two companies were engaged in a sort of subterranean war. 'Neither,' says Mr. Gardner Williams, 'would allow the divided blocks of claims to be worked by means of tunnels driven through the diamond-bearing ground of the opposing Company. The Central Company worked its claims by two separate shafts sunk in the blue ground at the bottom of the open mine, and the ground hoisted in the shafts was sent to the surface by means of aerial trams, while the French Company was compelled to drive tunnels into the walls of the mine adjoining the claims and connect them by a cross tunnel, as they were working through one shaft only.'

While the Kimberley Mine was deep in this internecine quarrel, Rhodes opened operations. His first approaches were friendly. Rhodes always preferred to deal with men rather than fight them. And indeed he saw clearly that a fight between Kimberley and De Beers might ruin both. For the new era of underground workings and the economies in working, which were the result of consolidation, had enormously increased the power of production. Falls of reef were no longer to be feared, mechanical haulage through the shafts had become as simple a problem as the haulage of coal up the shaft of a coal-mine. The force of gravitation was being

applied with increasing success to the recovery of diamonds, which became more and more mechanical. 'Our engineers,' said Rhodes, 'stated that they could give us 8000, 10,000, 12,000, even 15,000 loads a day, and we felt we were only just beginning diamond mining again.'<sup>1</sup>

They reported also that Kimberley Mine could be made to yield the same result. In the past the outraged law of gravitation had intervened to limit output. Now it was merely a question of sinking shafts, and constructing tiers of galleries one under the other. 'It is possible,' as Rhodes said after the battle, 'for the Kimberley Mine alone to produce twice the diamonds that the world will take under any ill-regulated management that would or might have occurred.'<sup>2</sup> Yet, as Rhodes calculated, the potential yield of De Beers was double the potential yield of the Kimberley Mine.

Such was the position when Rhodes approached Barnato. It was a case, as Rhodes said afterwards, of 'either an arrangement with Kimberley Mine or the control of Kimberley Mine,' and Rhodes tried first for an arrangement. 'We approached,' he afterwards said, 'the controlling powers in Kimberley Mine in every possible way that you could conceive. I valued De Beers Mine at a great deal higher figure than they valued it; but I was willing to give way in everything in order that we might obtain amalgamation which meant control, which meant the saving of our industry. Gentlemen, I was met simply with smiles and the most obdurate statements, I was met by the judgment of the gentlemen at the street corner, who would never reason with me, never discuss details as to the

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, p. 748.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 751.

value of the Kimberley Mine, but contented themselves by reiterating, "Kimberley Mine! Why, it is worth three times what De Beers is worth."

Rhodes, then, was met by this 'solid, obdurate wall,' and there was now only the other alternative left—to secure the control of the Kimberley Mine. Either that or 'sell my shares and go home,' as Rhodes said afterwards.

It was a formidable task; in appearance the Kimberley group were far stronger than De Beers. They were generally supposed to have a richer mine; they were better known in finance; they had a greater command of wealth. But Rhodes saw that there was one line of weakness through Barnato's position—the holdings of the French Company. These holdings he determined to secure.

Now it was known at that time that the House of Rothschild had its exceedingly keen eyes upon the diamond diggings. It had already sent Mr. E. G. de Crano to report, and it had no doubt been tempted more than once to take a hand in the amalgamation. Rhodes, then, in his search for the means to buy the French Company, turned to London and opened negotiations with Lord Rothschild.

Mr. Gardner Williams gives us an excellent account of these negotiations, in which he took an active part. They were first indirect and by letter, but Rhodes, well knowing the urgency of time, did not wait for a reply. On July 6, 1887, he set out for London, taking his manager with him, and when they arrived they went at once to Lord Rothschild's office.

Lord Rothschild afterwards confessed that he liked Rhodes; 'he knew what he wanted and came



to the point.' Rhodes left the office with the assurance that if he could buy the French Company Rothschild would find a million sterling to pay for it.

The same night Rhodes left for Paris with a bevy of his own and Rothschild's experts in his train. 'You know the story,' said Rhodes gleefully, 'of my getting on board the steamer at Cape Town, going home, and buying the French Company within twenty-four hours, and the excitement caused thereby.'<sup>1</sup>

It was not exactly in twenty-four hours, but it was speedily done. The French Company valued their property at £1,400,000; Rhodes closed with them, arranged for an advance of £750,000 from Lord Rothschild, and returned in triumph.<sup>2</sup>

Now it is true that this deal caused excitement, and well it might. For Barnato and his friends were faced with the prospect of an enemy reinforced a hundredfold in the very heart of their position. They had hoped to buy in the French Company. They could not hope to buy up De Beers.

The first action of Barnato was to try to upset the sale by persuading the shareholders of the French Company not to confirm the transaction. To this end they proposed a higher price. And here Rhodes met Barnato in a very interesting way. 'You can offer them,' he said, '£300,000 more, and we will offer another £300,000 on that; you can go on and bid for the benefit of the French shareholders *ad infinitum*, but we shall have it in the end. Why then fight?'

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, p. 750.

<sup>2</sup> The money was paid by an issue of De Beers shares, so well conceived that the De Beers Company made £100,000 profit by the transactions. *Gardner Williams*, v. 288.

And here Rhodes made his offer. Let him complete the purchase without interference and he would sell the claims of the French Company to the Kimberley Central for Kimberley shares. This seemed to Barnato to be just what he wanted. He closed with the offer, amalgamated the French claims in his own Company and paid De Beers in scrip. Now this scrip amounted to a fifth share in the control of the Kimberley Mine.

Barnato still meant war ; he still thought he could undersell De Beers because he had a richer mine, and he proposed to take the Kimberley Mine home, make an *English Company* of it, and ' run Kimberley against De Beers.'

It was clear to Rhodes, from his engineers' reports, that such a struggle could only end in overloading the market and ruining the industry. He made one more effort to settle. He offered Barnato the market rates of five to four. This would have given £2,500,000 to Kimberley and £2,000,000 to De Beers, but, as De Beers held the fifth interest in the Kimberley Company, it would have really meant a balance of £500,000 on the side of De Beers. Barnato refused the offer, and again there was nothing left for it but war.

As we have already seen, Alfred Beit had long been associated with Rhodes, owing to his interests in the De Beers Mine, and owing also to the natural friendship and mutual esteem, which kept these two together through life. Besides this interest in De Beers, Alfred Beit was an important pivot in the Kimberley negotiations. His firm had founded the Griqualand West Diamond Mining Company, afterwards reformed as the French Company, and therefore Alfred Beit, although inside the Kimberley

Mine, was the opponent of Barnato and the ally of Rhodes.

'All we possessed,' as Rhodes told the story, 'was a fifth, but a fifth is a beginning; and after a good deal of consideration, in which I must say Mr. Beit, one of the firm of Messrs. Porges and Company, was of the most material assistance, we decided one morning that we would buy a sufficient number of Kimberley Centrals to give us control. That was a big undertaking, and meant two or three millions of money. But we said, "If we only have the pluck to undertake it we must succeed. Don't let us go to the shareholders. If we fail they can only make us personally liable." I said at first, "Where's the money to come from?" But Mr. Beit only said, "Oh! we will get the money if we can only buy the shares."' <sup>1</sup>

And now began in earnest the final stage of this great battle. Rhodes and his friends bought with the single purpose of securing control; Barnato bought 'because he was infiltrated with this notion that the Kimberley Mine was worth two of De Beers.' Wherever and whenever Rhodes bought Barnato bought also; but there was this difference, Rhodes was attacking; Barnato was defending. There was no thought of buying or of selling De Beers shares, and every share in the Kimberley Mine bought in the De Beers interest was held. But Barnato bought shares which his own friends were selling. As the prices soared upwards, Barnato's friends could not resist so divine a chance of making a profit. Barnato was buying from his principal shareholders.

In the heat of the contest Rhodes happened to

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, p. 752.

meet Barnato. 'Well,' said Rhodes, 'how are we getting on now?'

'Why,' replied Barnato, 'you've bought a million pounds' worth of Central.'

'Yes,' retorted Rhodes, 'and we'll buy another million pounds' worth. And now,' Rhodes continued, 'I'll tell you what you'll find out presently, and that is you'll be left alone in the Central Company.'

Rhodes added that he would make him one last offer—'Market rates for Centrals *versus* De Beers.'

'And,' Barnato asked, 'if I don't take it what will happen?'

For answer Rhodes reminded him of the position: 'Here you have your leading shareholders patting you on the back and backing you up, but selling out round the corner all the time.'

It was the truth, and Barnato knew it. And he knew also that in another battle he was being worsted also—the battle of production. Kimberley Mine had been producing a little over a carat per load. Rhodes spurred on his management to beat it. We must have diamonds, he would say. Instead of leaving the blue ground on the floors to disintegrate under sun and rain, the ground as it was recovered was thrown straight into the crushing and pulsating machines, and sorted at once. It was pointed out to Rhodes that many diamonds which remained concealed in the still integrated modules were being lost among the waste. Never mind, he said, we can recover them later; in the meantime we must increase our yield. De Beers mine blue was mixed with shale, yet its yield now stood at a carat and a quarter per load, almost a quarter of a carat higher than the average yield of the Kimberley Mine.

And at the same time that Rhodes convinced Barnato that he was beating him in buying, he convinced him that he was beating him in yield. After some days of heavy rain, when the diamonds, washed clean of their envelope of clay, shone and glistened on the floors of disintegrating ground, Rhodes marshalled the whole staff, and set them to gather diamonds like mushrooms in a field. The result was a haul of diamonds weighing 12,000 carats. Rhodes took them to Barnato's office, and poured them out before his rival's glistening eyes. 'See,' he said, 'what De Beers can do in one day !'

It is said that other arguments were used. Barnato had social ambitions. It was one of his desires to be a member of the Kimberley Club, it was another to be a Member of Parliament. And Rhodes both knew Barnato's heart and used his knowledge. 'This,' he said to Barnato, 'is no mere money transaction. I propose to make a gentleman of you—and a useful member of society,' and he threw into the scales both the Kimberley Club and the Kimberley seat.

Barnato hesitated, dazzled and bewildered by these temptations. But he had one difficulty left. 'You know, Rhodes, old man,' he said, 'your crowd will never leave me on the Directorate. They will turn me out in a year or two.'

Rhodes saw the point and went away thoughtfully pulling his nose. Next day he returned. 'I have got it,' he said; 'we shall make you a Life Governor.' 'A what?' said Barnato, for the term was new to company promotion in those days. 'A Life Governor,' Rhodes repeated. And he unfolded the plan by which Barnato was secured in his position.

Such was the origin of the Life Governorships of De Beers.

There were many old diggers in Kimberley, and speculators also, who never reconciled themselves to the amalgamation, and some who considered that they had been ruined by it. These, and others, formed a band of the aggrieved who pursued Rhodes through life with curses and threats of vengeance. Whatever view they take of it, all must admit that it was a battle. And in a battle there are always the vanquished as well as the victors. Rhodes was the victor. He took joy in the battle. At the annual meeting on March 31, 1888, when the shareholders offered him a bonus of £10,000 he waved the gift aside. 'We have beaten them all round,' he said. 'Every man has his own pleasure. My pleasure has been in beating them all round, and I want no sums of money.'

Rhodes brought not only Barnato to terms, but he partly persuaded, partly forced the then poorer mines of Bultfontein and Dutoitspan to give leases to De Beers by which control of the mines was exchanged for a fixed annual dividend. As for such mines as Koffyfontein and Klipfontein, Rhodes forced them to terms by a clear demonstration of the hard facts. 'If you have two rich mines working together in co-operation and not in antagonism the fate of the poorer mine lies in their hands.' The rich mine could produce collectively four times what the public could take and could be made to pay at a price at which the poor mines could not work. Therefore 'the poor land on the margin of cultivation has to do one of two things—to fight us for a short period or to take our terms.'

Thus the Diamond Mines of Griqualand West

were amalgamated in one Company with Rhodes in practical control. But there was still a difficulty. Rhodes's object, as we have seen, was not wealth but power, and in the wealth he now commanded he saw the power with which he could open the North. He proposed, in fact, to use the profits of the De Beers Company to build the railway through Bechuanaland and finance the Chartered Company. But for that a change in the Trust Deed of the De Beers Company was necessary, and it was necessary also to have the consent of Barnato.

Barnato was obstinate. Whoever heard of using the profits of a Company to extend an Empire? It was a crazy idea and it was bad business. Barnato, Beit, and Rhodes fought the matter out for a whole night. Beit supported Rhodes, but Barnato was obstinate. Rhodes, according to his wont, used every argument which he thought might appeal to his opponent. Barnato remained unconvinced; but at last, as night drew into morning, he surrendered. 'Some people,' he said, 'have a fancy for this thing and some for that; you have a fancy for making an Empire. Well, I suppose I must give it to you.'

One obstacle remained. Certain shareholders of the Central Company opposed the Consolidation on the ground that De Beers was not a 'similar company.' The case came before the Supreme Court, and the judges were amazed as the Trust Deed was read to them and they heard the powers set forth.

'They can do anything and everything, my lord,' said counsel for the shareholders. 'I suppose, since the time of the East India Company, no Company has had such power as this. They are not confined to Africa, and they are even authorised to take

steps for the good government of any territory, so that if they obtain a charter in accordance with the Trust Deed from the Secretary of State, they would be empowered to annex a portion of territory in Central Africa, raise and maintain a standing army, and undertake warlike operations.'

The Court took the view of the plaintiffs. The Consolidation was stopped; but Rhodes was again too much for the Opposition. He placed the Central Company in liquidation, and bought up the property. And so by January 1889 the work was complete. Rhodes had consolidated the diamond mines, and he held in his hands the means to carry out his great idea.



## CHAPTER VI

### A CONVERSATION, NOT ALTOGETHER IMAGINARY

'... no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.'—BACON.

IN 1881 Cecil Rhodes was returned for the Cape Parliament as one of the two members for Barkly West, the rural division of Griqualand West. 'I went down,' he afterwards confessed, 'saying in my practical way, "I will go and take the North."' His first act was to overturn the Sprigg Government which he had been returned to support. He went back to Kimberley and converted a hostile community to his point of view in a single speech.

He obtained from the new Government a Commission to consider the boundaries of Griqualand West, and, with the support of Sir Hercules Robinson, then High Commissioner, took a main hand in the struggle for the country to the north of Kimberley, the vast territory of Bechuanaland, then a lawless and debatable land, upon which the Transvaal Boers were fast encroaching.

By a series of skilful negotiations with the Boer freebooters of Stellaland, he induced them to come under the British flag; though he was baffled for a while by the sister Republic of Goshen.

He accompanied the Warren Expedition of 1885 which brought Kruger and Joubert to terms; and

in the end he secured his first step—‘the road to the North,’ ‘the neck of the bottle,’ ‘the Suez Canal of the trade of the Interior,’ as he called Bechuanaland, which became by his exertions, not indeed a British Colony, but at least a British protectorate.

He then set about to secure the North itself; and to that end he sent various agents, including his partner Rudd, to obtain a concession for gold-mining from Lobengula, King of the Matabele, which concession Rudd, after wild and extravagant perils and adventures, secured and brought back.

Now this concession was in jeopardy, because Rhodes had no man whom he could trust with the courage and resolution to see it through.

At this point—leaving very much still to be explained—we return to Jameson.

There is no sure knowledge of how these two first came together; but beyond question they were already friends in the ‘eighties, and in the latter part of 1886 something occurred which made the friendship a ‘marriage of twin minds.’ Before that date the bosom friend of Cecil Rhodes and confidant of all his dreams had been a frank, sunny-tempered young Englishman, Neville Pickering, who was at the time Secretary of De Beers. They shared the same office and the same dwelling-house, worked together, played together, rode together, shot together. And Rhodes wrote one of his dream-of-Empire wills, leaving to Neville his entire-fortune to be used as he thought wise for the ends of which Rhodes had told him. In 1884 Pickering was thrown by his horse and so much injured that he never rightly recovered. The mischief settled on his lungs, and by the end of 1886 it became clear that he was

dying. Jameson, as the doctor, and Rhodes, as the friend, did all for the young man that skill and friendship could do, but in vain. One gathers from a lingering tradition that Noville's sick-bed clinched the intimacy of the eight preceding years in which Rhodes and Jameson had certainly known each other in a school of fierce conflicts and unreserved intimacies.

The end came when Rhodes was away in the Transvaal helping to peg out the main reef of the Witwatersrand, at that time being prospected by eager pioneers from Barberton, Natal, and Kimberley. Dr. Hans Sauer, who was with him at the time, had secured options which might have made Rhodes on the Witwatersrand what he had become at Kimberley, as, for example, an option of ten days for £500 on the farm of Hans Duplessis, where afterwards more than twenty million pounds' worth of gold was mined; as well as on the farm of Doornfontein for £250 which would have given Rhodes a great tract of country alongside the township of Johannesburg, then unbuilt. Within two years, by municipal valuation, the farm of Doornfontein was worth £3,000,000.

Rhodes was staying at the little homestead of Klein Paardekraal, four or five miles from where Johannesburg now stands: round him then, in a country now covered with tall head-works and high heaps of tailings, townships, and factories, was nothing but the wind-swept downs of the high veld. The negotiations were complete, the transfers were ready; all that remained was the signing of Rhodes's name. At that moment a message arrived from Kimberley that Neville Pickering could not live much longer. When Rhodes received this word,

which had in all likelihood been sent by Jameson, he simply said to Sauer, 'I'm off,' and rode down to Kimberley, sitting on the top of the mail-bags which were roped over the mail-cart.

He remained at Pickering's bedside, careless of anything but the wants and comforts of his friend. Sauer telegraphed and telegraphed again, but got no answer, and the options lapsed which might, in Rhodes's hands, have made him master of the world's chief source of gold. At about one o'clock on the morning of October 16, 1886, he asked William Pickering to fetch the Doctor. Jameson came, but could do nothing. Pickering whispered to Rhodes, 'You have been father, mother, brother, and sister to me,' and died in his arms.

Neville Pickering was buried in the Kimberley Cemetery. A great concourse of the miners and diamond-buyers of the Fields gathered round the grave. Barney Barnato, most soft-hearted of men when his heart was touched, sniffed and blubbered. And Rhodes, alternating hysterically between laughter and tears, said in his high falsetto, 'Ah, Barney, he will never sell you another parcel of diamonds!'

From that day Cecil Rhodes never lived in the house he had shared with Neville Pickering, but took up his quarters with Jameson in the little one-storey, corrugated-iron-roofed and verandahed bungalow aforementioned, on the street over against the Kimberley Club.

Thus after eight years of testing acquaintance began that more than friendship which was to change Jameson's career and to bind him until his death to immense and inconceivable labours wherein self was not, and to move the First Doctor in Kimberley

to ride out into the heart of Africa upon perilous adventures, to become diplomatist, soldier, explorer, leader in forlorn hopes, prisoner, and Prime Minister. How was this miracle wrought? None can say for certain; but we can guess at it from the circumstances, and from our knowledge of the two men.

The recorded sayings of Jameson are few and laconic. No man ever expressed himself in words less self-revealing or more casual. A humorously violent exclamation, generally of abuse or disbelief, the raising of an eyebrow, an outward jerk of the hand, clinched the main part of his communications with his fellow-men. Yet once kindled, his mind leaped forward with extraordinary swiftness, anticipating by intuition swift as a woman's the reasoning processes of other men.

No man thought more deliberately than Rhodes. He laboured in travail of great yet simple ideas, ruminated on first principles for weeks, months, years, until they were resolved into all their consequences and followed into their remotest ramifications, and never tired of repeating a truth he had proved, a principle on which he founded himself. His vocabulary was inadequate to his thoughts; he rolled and heaved in mental parturition; he fidgeted 'as if he had a flea between his shoulders'; he was uncouth to eccentricity. And through some shamefaced avoidance of any show of altruism he disguised his ideas in crude appeals to his own interest and the interest of those whom he sought to yoke to his remorseless ideals. Herein at least the two men were alike, both instinctively at pains to disguise the sentiments that moved, the dreams that urged them, and the light they followed. They hid

their virtues with more shame than other men hide their vices.

Conceive, then, these two most firm and uncere-  
monious of friends, in the intervals of business and  
of practice, late at night in their little sitting-room,  
or early in the morning—Rhodes shouting elemental  
truths at Jameson from his bath tub ; or in morning  
rides—Rhodes sitting with a loose rein, neglectful of  
his horse, brooding over or reiterating his ideas, as a  
cave-man strikes a flint ; Jameson sparing of speech,  
humorous, cynical, but a flint full of fire.

Conceive, next, the sitting-room of the bungalow,  
the table after dinner, Jameson smoking his endless  
chain of cigarettes, Rhodes rolling in his chair like a  
whale in deep seas, reiterating brief statements a  
hundred times, not only feeling for the word he  
seemed to need, but for his hearer's assent—like an  
elephant laboriously testing with foot and trunk the  
bridge on which he would trust his reasoning bulk.

The talk was of the North—the North—the North  
—Rhodes as he used the word always thrusting an  
arm upwards and outwards in a northerly direction  
to convey his idea of the vastness of the unknown—  
that unclaimed Interior. Did Jameson realise that  
to the north the great plateau of the African Con-  
tinent continued—up to the Equatorial Lakes, up  
to the Soudan—cool under the Equator—a country  
for white men ? Could Jameson imagine it, settled,  
like America, with homesteads, and cities, and rail-  
ways between them—as big as the United States,  
as populous, and British from Cape to Cairo ? Had  
Jameson ever thought of the independence of the  
Thirteen Colonies which became the United States ?

Beyond an occasional mine-manager or two,  
Jameson had not considered America.

Well, in the North was something to make up to England for these thirteen lost Colonies.

Still Jameson was unmoved, possibly ribald, so Rhodes fought his way on.

No, it was not nonsense, but a practical idea. One had worked at it; one had gone some way already. Jameson knew what one had done. It was no laughing matter! It was more important than his pills and pregnancies!

Let Jameson fairly consider the case in all its bearings and then admit himself cornered. Let him consider it for example *qua* the federation of South Africa. The one question governed the other.

Jameson could see as far as that? Obvious! He who held the North held 'the balance of the map'—the balance of the map—and here Rhodes kept on repeating for a minute or two, the balance of the map, as one conscious of making a great point.

Did Jameson follow him? The federation of South Africa was the same as the Amalgamation of the Diamond Mines! Exactly. And to be approached in the same way. Carnarvon had tried to federate South Africa from outside, just as Merri-man had tried to amalgamate the mines from outside. They had both failed. For it was a thing to be done from inside—step by step, a work of years. One must appeal to the interests of men, and one must hold the balance of what men wanted. One must hold the balance of the map.

There was the secret. The North was the balance, the coveted balance. Kruger wanted it—Kruger was *qua* the Transvaal like Barnato *qua* the Kimberley Mine—Jameson realised that? Kruger had his hobby. Every one had his hobby. Kruger wanted a Republic of South Africa under its own

flag—a Boer Republic, from the Cape to the Zambesi. But he was landlocked—the Transvaal was landlocked. He had tried to get Bechuanaland. One had beaten him there, simply enough, by offering his freebooters British titles which made land more valuable than Transvaal titles. One appealed to men's interests. Yes, the land of Goshen had been more difficult: there one had had to get up Warren to settle the point, and soldiers were always a nuisance. But in one way or another one had saved Bechuanaland.

Jameson knew that of course; but *here* was the important point. Bechuanaland was the road to the North. Did Jameson follow?—the road to the North, the neck of the bottle, the Suez Canal—Jameson must see that point.

Of course he saw it—a duffer if he didn't. Well, then, it was not merely the road to the North, but the North itself that Kruger wanted. Why? Because the North was the balance of the map.

The North was the trump card, the key position, the bulk of the shares. If Kruger got the North, he held a solid block of claims from the Orange River to the Zambesi. He had what the British wanted, which was trade, what the Dutch wanted, which was land—a very strong position. If Kruger had the North, the amalgamation would be on Kruger's terms: he could force all South Africa into his Republic. *Now* was Jameson convinced?

Here Jameson, who never missed a point in any argument, would probably observe that the seaports and the railways were still to be in British hands, so that the Republic would be helpless without an outlet to the sea.

Yes, Rhodes would reply, a good point, an excel-



lent point; but Kruger had seen to that. Now that he had the gold of the Witwatersrand at his command he could build his Delagoa Bay railway, which would make him independent of the British system. It would beat the British system, for it was the shortest route from the gold-mines to the sea. It would govern the trade of South Africa. One had tried to stop it: one had tried to push the Cape railway through the Transvaal to Delagoa Bay; but one could not get the Cape Government to see things in time. If Kruger had the Delagoa Bay line, and if he had the North, he had all the cards, he had all the claims, all the shares, he could force his federation. *Now* did Jameson see the importance of the North? *Now* would he admit himself cornered?

Here Rhodes's voice went up into his shrill falsetto cock-crow of triumph.

And Jameson, on his side, considering the matter with half-sheathed eyes, would grudgingly concede that there might be something in it.

Very good! There were two key positions—the North and Delagoa Bay. One had one's agents in Portugal trying to buy Delagoa Bay; but the Portuguese were obstinate—poor but proud—and the British Government was slack in the matter. No, *there* Kruger looked like winning. But the North remained. For the hundredth time, did Jameson see the importance of the North? . . .

There was gold in the North. Yes, Jameson had a perfect right to ask what one could possibly want with more gold. A fair point: *qua* gold one had enough; but *qua* power, one must deal with men as one found them. There must be a magnet.

Gold had taken one's people into the Transvaal. Gold might take them to the North. . . .

One had been working at the problem for years—'Rhodes's hobby,' one's friends called it. Every man had his hobby—just like Kruger. One had tried the Imperial Government; but one could not count on the Imperial factor. It had failed in the Orange Free State; it had failed in the Transvaal. Let Jameson consider Majuba. Jameson *had* considered it. The Imperial factor feared expense, feared responsibility. True, the High Commissioner was one's friend: one had induced him to make a Protectorate of Bechuanaland, and to negotiate the Moffat Treaty with Lobengula. Jameson understood the Moffat Treaty? No? Well, the Moffat Treaty was a sort of option. Lobengula agreed not to let any other power into Matabeleland without the consent of the British Power. An option! But if the Boers were once to break in one could not trust the Imperial factor to put them out again. Jameson saw that? Of course he did. One could not trust them to keep *even* the Bechuanaland Protectorate. No, not after Majuba. One must eliminate the Imperial factor.

One had tried the Cape Government . . . lawyers, politicians, merchants . . . the Rosebank Party . . . seaports and their rivalries. One had told them 'the mists of Table Mountain covered all.' *They* could not see the importance of the North.

Did not Hofmeyr see it? Yes, Jameson was right. Hofmeyr *did* see it; but Hofmeyr actually wanted Kruger to have it. Imagine it—with Kruger shutting out Cape wine and tobacco. . . . No, the Cape would not help one at all.

What was there left? One had one's friends and

one's money. Did Jameson remember what the East India Company had done? If in India, why not in Africa? In India there had been trade to draw men on, in Africa there was gold. Just suppose, for the sake of argument, the North occupied by a British Company. It must then become a British Colony. The North would be in British hands, and with the balance of the North in British hands one might federate South Africa on British lines. It put a trump card in one's hands. Now, Jameson had seen that; he had admitted every point as one went along, so he must accept the conclusion. If one held the balance of the North, the Transvaal was almost surrounded. And the Boers wanted land.

Yes, Jameson knew all that: he had heard it before; he was sick of hearing it. . . . But there it was: Jameson could not get away from it.

One, of course, had done something *qua* the North; one was, in fact, rather deeply committed. One had sent one's agents—traders, big-game hunters; one had to use the material to hand. One used failures and one failed. . . . There was Fry, for example. At last one had sent Rudd. Now Rudd had done very well . . . an astonishing fellow Rudd.

But there were complications; there were difficulties. Jameson might help. . . . No sense in being hasty. Obviously one had to use one's friends for one's ideas.

Let Jameson listen to what one had to say. Nature abhorred a vacuum, and when Rudd left the savage monarch, Lobengula, there *was* a vacuum. One had tried to fill it. There was Rochfort Maguire . . . there was Thompson . . . Jameson knew all

that. He wanted to go to bed. . . . He must listen, the thing was serious—really serious.

There were the rival concession-hunters, Maund in particular—a clever fellow. Maund had created a party, and had got the army and a lot of the indunas on his side. The King was getting nervous. One's agents were very anxious. . . .

As for Rochfort Maguire, he was bored. One could not expect a Fellow of All Souls to remain indefinitely eating raw meat in a savage kraal. Then Thompson was getting jumpy. He had had a bad experience with natives. When one has seen a ramrod thrust down one's father's throat, it left an impression. One had to allow for that in Thompson.

There were still the rifles and ammunition to be delivered to Lobengula, as per contract; the savage monarch must be kept sweet while the Company was being organised. Now if Jameson undertook it. . . .

No sense in laughing! The thing must be faced. Jameson wanted a holiday. Everybody said so. Jameson wanted some shooting—excellent shooting in Matabeleland. Jameson did not care a pin for shooting? Well, one knew that. But there were other things to be considered. Jameson liked a gamble. Here was a chance, a great chance. Suppose Jameson took some shares in the Company at the price of issue. One could get him an allotment. They were bound to go up—no doubt about the gold in Mashonaland.

One admitted that Jameson's practice was a certainty—an excellent practice; but there was no future for Kimberley since the amalgamation—only a humdrum, steady-going, dull sort of diamond-

factory. And then, of course, Jameson could always come back to his practice. . . .

Then *qua* duty. Here was something worth doing—to make sure of the North. All very well to swear; but there *was* the duty business. It existed in life, Jameson *must* admit that side of it. Jameson would admit nothing. . . .

Well, the situation really was desperate, and how could one carry through one's ideas if one's friends did not back one? Rudd was ill. Maguire was bored. Thompson was nervous. Obviously, there was no one but Jameson, it was the thing for Jameson to do.

No, Jameson would not make an ass of himself. There were other arguments, many others. Now *qua* fun, *qua* excitement, *qua* seeing life, *qua* the really big thing, *qua* all that duty business too! But they could go over it again to-morrow morning.

And so on and on and on, until by continual hammering the steel in Jameson took the magnetism which turned him to the North until his life's end. Grumbling a little, blaspheming a little, laughing a good deal, the First Doctor in Kimberley, *the* Doctor in Kimberley, resigned his practice to the care of a partner, and undertook to accompany George Musson, a trader of Shoshong, who had contracted to carry 500 rifles and 50,000 rounds of ammunition—one half, that is to say, of the agreed total—to Lobengula, King of the Matabele, at his chief place or royal kraal, then known among white men as Gubuluwayo.

## CHAPTER VII

### JAMESON GOES NORTH

'Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven,  
It was my hint to speak.'

WE can date the departure of Jameson to a day from a letter which he wrote to his brother Tom, then a family doctor in the London suburb of Tulse Hill. It is written from Kimberley on February 2, 1889. 'I leave to-morrow morning for Matabeleland,' he writes, 'drive up about 250 miles to catch my wagons which started a fortnight ago. Then about a month's trek to the King's kraal, after that doubtful; but hope to go into Mashonaland, and possibly up the Zambesi. Shooting and see the country is the ostensible object of the trip; but possibilities of gold in the future also enter into it.'

Then comes a discreet reference to his friend: 'Rhodes was to have come with me, but has to go to England on business and may join me later on.' And he proceeds: 'My turn-out is fairly perfect in the way of food, servants, horses, dogs, armoury, etc., and I have a very nice companion named Dr. Harris, an enthusiastic sportsman. The duration of the trip is doubtful, as there may be some finessing to be done with the Chief to get through into the interior; but I expect to manage it all right. After I return, supposing things here look well, I may take a trip home.' He ends with references to his

brother Sam on the Raud, whom Jameson had been to see a couple of months before—altogether a letter which shows that Jameson had already the habit of keeping his secrets—and the secrets of others.

Bechuanaland, to the casual eye, is an abomination of desolation—interminable wilderness of grassy and shrubby sand-flats—camel-thorn and acacia-trees in the hollows, and, above, rocky kopjes, covered with stones and yellow grass—patches of old mealie-gardens and deserted kraals—nothing of life to be seen save a troop of trotting ostriches racing the wind, a meerkat on his haunches beside his burrow, or a korhaan soaring like a huge black lark into the blue sky, with, at rare intervals, a swarming native *stad* of straw and reed huts, built round the *kotla* of some local chief.

Such was the country—the vast and empty corridor to the North—through which Jameson now travelled. Yet, empty as it seemed, it had a history no less wild and lawless than that Borderland of the Gala Water whence Jameson drew some of his fighting and adventurous blood. First, on Jameson's left as he took his way North by Geering's post-cart, lay Taungs, the capital town of the Batlapin Chief, Mankaroane, formerly held for the Chief against the Stellalanders by that redoubtable freebooter, 'Scotty Smith,' with his little army of thirty white men and sixty Zulus. Scotty, who boasted that he had stolen 750 horses, the terror alike of Boer, diamond-merchant, and I.D.B., ex-Guardsman, ex-policeman, stock thief, and highwayman, who had broken every gaol in Griqualand West, was still a power in those regions when Jameson went North.

A stage farther, on his right, was Vryburg, capital town of Stellaland, which Rhodes had turned from

a freebooting Republic into a frontier district of the Colony. Jameson had reason to be discreet as he passed through Vryburg, whose citizens hankered to take part in the game in which Jameson was now a player. Four years before, the town had decided to support a Matabele pretender, one Kimmia, an illegitimate son of the great Matabele Chief, Mosilikatsi, father of Lobengula, and had offered to the Chief Khama the services of 2000 frontiersmen, Dutch and British, for war against Lobengula, 'subject to certain conditions.' The pretender was then under the protection of Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal, at Rustenburg, and was to be backed by 500 of Kruger's men, acting in conjunction with the Vryburgers. That particular intrigue had been nipped in the bud by Sir Sidney Shippard, who arrived with his Chief Police Officer in the town of Vryburg, rather suddenly, on October 23, 1885, and bound over its chief citizens for breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act, sedition, and contempt of court, to keep the peace for twelve months. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, addressing these wild men from the 'placid, pathetic contentment' of Kimberley, was well justified in its comment: 'It will be a long time before the restless, roving, filibustering spirit will die out in Stellaland.'

Another day's travelling, and Jameson reached Mafeking, which he was to know better in later years. It was, even then, thriving as a frontier settlement under British protection. Yet only a few years before it had been the centre of a pitiless and unequal war between the Boer freebooters of Rooigrond and the Baralong Chief, Montsiosa, waged for the hunting veld and grazing land of the tribe.

The travellers must have heard the story, for it



was only five years old when they stopped at the town. Montsioa had been supported in his defence by Christopher Bethell, an English officer, and Walker, a Lowland Scot. The Boers had built a laager of wagons and stone walls over against the town, and were pounding it with a long Krupp gun; but they could not draw the garrison, till at last they drove the tribe's captured cattle past the town in full view of their starving owners. Then the garrison made a sortie, and were caught in ambush by a strong force of freebooters.

A hundred Baralong fell to the Boer rifles. Israel Molemmow, a son of the Chief, who was fighting next to Bethell, was shot through the right shoulder, and soon afterwards Bethell was hit by a bullet which carried away his eye and part of his cheek. He gave his rifle to Israel, saying, 'Fight for me, I am wounded.' 'I cannot,' Israel replied, 'for I too am wounded.'

When dusk fell the firing ceased. Then the Boers came up to the wounded men, and Israel, who shammed death, heard them say to Bethell, 'Do you wish to live or die?'

'I wish to die,' said Bethell.

Then the freebooters shot him. 'Now, Bethell,' they said, 'come and fight us.'<sup>1</sup>

At Mafeking, the God-forsaken, Dr. Jameson and his fellow-traveller overtook his wagons, and thenceforward they had to accommodate their pace to the exasperating crawl of the oxen. Thus Northward they passed over country hallowed by memories of

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book, C. 4213, pp. 135-6. General Warren's obituary notice of Bethell is given in *The Times* of August 19, 1884. 'We withdrew our protection from Montsioa,' says Warren, 'but Mr. Bethell, like Gordon at Khartoum, would not desert his post at Schuba, and has died the death of an Englishman.'

David Livingstone, past the almost indistinguishable ruins of his mission-station burnt nearly thirty years before by 'the Boers of the Cashan Mountains, otherwise named Magaliesberg, who had fled from British law,' thence onward by fever-stricken Gaberones, Mochudi, and the headwaters of the Crocodile River—if dry sand-beds can be called headwaters—to Shoshong, capital town of Khama, Chief of the Bamangwato, the northernmost and strongest tribe of the Bechuana people.

Khama was something of a statesman, as was necessary for one who lived with the Transvaal Boers on the east and the Matabele to the north. When the Boers threatened him he relied on the support of Sir Sidney Shippard and the Bechuana-land Police, for he was under the protection of the Great Queen. When the Matabele raided them, Khama and his men would fall back into the sandy intricacies of his desert hinterland till the invading impis were broken by thirst and the cunning ambushes of his riflemen. As Khama's main defence was his superiority over Lobengula in the possession of guns, Jameson had reason to fear the opposition of this Chief to his further progress. But the arm of Rhodes was long, and his friend, Sir Sidney Shippard, had made the way smooth. Jameson and his caravan were allowed to pass unchallenged.

Jameson's road hereafter lay through territory now claimed by the Matabele, the gold concessions of Tati, where the party were hospitably entertained by Major Sam Edwards, and beyond it, through a country where the grass grew green in the valleys, and where the track climbed through rugged kloofs and under towering masses of grey granite—hun-

dreds of feet high—steep and precipitous, like gigantic ruined castles, their bases strewn with huge boulders, and other boulders, no less enormous, miraculously balanced on the summits.

A silent, eerie country—the gateway of Rhodes's desired North. In the distance stretched the granite wall of the Matoppos, a long blue line across the northern horizon. Over or through this wall they now must pass, for from Mangwe up to the plateau above the road rose 1400 feet. There, at last, at Manyami River, some 60 or 70 miles north of Tati, Jameson saw the frontier guards of the King, the first Matabele Regiment, warriors of the Zulu race, with ostrich-feather capes, ox-tail garters, long ox-hide shields, and heavy stabbing assegais. He must have looked at them curiously—little dreaming how one day they would enter into his destiny.

By aid of pink beads, brass buttons, and blue calico called *limbo*, they established friendly relations. Some 40 miles farther on, however, the convoy was stopped by the King's orders—rather general than particular—and Dr. Jameson rode by himself into 'Gubuluwayo' on horseback to ask the King to give the wagons 'the way.'

The town of Buluwayo stood in the centre of a great plain to the north of the blue, steep Matoppos. Twelve miles to the north-east lay the flat-topped mountain of Thabas Induna (the Mountain of the Chiefs) with a small pointed hill on either side, the 'Sheba's breasts' of Rider Haggard's romance, and, 6 miles due north, the solitary flat-topped hill, Umfasa Miti. The plain thus guarded was grassy and sparsely covered with mimosa scrub. Through the midst flowed a little stream, the Buluwayo River, a tributary of the Umguzu, and half a mile

to the north of this brook was a great oval of huts, the town of Buluwayo, around an inner circle—the buck kraal, or royal enclosure, of the great Chief, Lobengula.

Dr. Rutherford Harris gives a vivid description of this enceinte, where the King was to be seen sitting on an old condensed-milk packing-case, leaning against the posts of the stage on which four slaughtered oxen were placed daily. ‘Lobengula,’ says Dr. Harris, ‘is a man of about 5 feet 11 inches in height. His weight measurement must be about 300 pounds and his chest measurement is from 55 to 60 inches. His walk is most imposingly majestic; he treads the ground in a manner that shows that he is conscious of his absolute power.’ We have other accounts of him to a similar effect—a large man, very fat, his black and glossy skin usually naked except for the Kafir *moochee*, his head adorned with the Zulu ring, spending his days in his buck kraal surrounded by the huts of his sixty wives, making medicines out of roots in calabashes to bring rain or prevent witchcraft, or in counsel with his indunas, or reviewing his troops. He lived much, we are told, in a wagon which he had got from a trader, where he was accustomed to lie with his head and arms on the front box, and there ‘great masses of meat like the pieces they give to the lions in the Zoo, but as if thrown into a big fire,’ were brought him, to be ‘torn in pieces with a kind of stick’ and devoured, ‘altogether very much like a wild beast.’

Lobengula’s face was described by Mr. Rudd, who had ample opportunities for studying it, as ‘partly worried, partly good-natured, and partly cruel,’ but with ‘a very pleasant smile.’ The King had reasons

for worry—in the approach of the white man, the intrigues of his indunas, and the indiscipline of his army, ever clamouring to be allowed to wipe out the rash intruders. Lobengula's father, Mosilikatsi, had been at once the Moses and the Joshua of the tribe, the leader in the great flight from Zululand in which the Matabele nation began, in the long sojourn in the Transvaal, in the disastrous wars with the voor-trekking Boers which led to the second great flight, which never stopped till the guardian Matoppos had been placed between Matabele and Boer.

The tribe had been hammered into a nation of the Zulu mould by the iron hand of Mosilikatsi. Its army of at least fifteen thousand spearmen was organised in impi or regiments on the Zulu model, and lived in military villages, where they grazed their own and the King's cattle on the surrounding plains, and were mobilised occasionally for a raid on the Barotse to the north or the Bechuana to the south or on the Mashona to the east. The great regions thus occupied and desolated by the Matabele were bounded on the south by the Limpopo, on the west and north by the Zambesi, and on the east by Portuguese Mozambique—one vast raid-swept, terror-stricken country, as large as Germany and France together.

Lobengula maintained, partly by statesmanship, partly by terror, the power which his father had created. He was a believer in that pomp and ceremony which no wise ruler despises. Behind the King, says Dr. Harris, stood some twenty or thirty of his courtiers, who at every sentence he uttered interjected a chorus of flattering titles—'Stabber of the Sun,' 'Mountain of Zulus,' 'Eater of Men,' 'the

Man who Owns all the Cattle,' and above all the sacred word 'Kumalo.'<sup>1</sup> These courtiers were in fact the M'bongos or official praisers who play in the savage courts of an African chief very much the same part as the scientifically controlled Government Press of a Western democracy.

It is commonly said that Dr. Jameson was the first man, whether black or white, to approach the King without crawling, or to address him without squatting. Possibly he knew the strict letter of the law of Matabele etiquette, that a visitor must have his head at a lower elevation than the head of the King. Here his small stature and light physique gave him the means to vindicate Court etiquette without derogation from the dignity of his colour. But, etiquette aside, his courage, his frankness, and his infectious charm soon brought Jameson and the King upon the best of terms.

Dr. Jameson arrived at Buluwayo on April 2, 1889, and left on the 12th of the same month, taking Maguire with him but leaving Thompson to fill that 'vacuum' which Rhodes sagaciously feared as abhorred not by Nature only but by Kings. The embassy had been a success so far as it went: the first moiety of rifles and ammunition had been delivered with due ceremonial, and Jameson had been well received by the King. Yet the Ambassador must have seen and heard enough of Matabele politics to realise that the hopes of his friend were built upon little more than the capricious favour of a savage monarch assailed by the jealousies and suspicions of his warlike people, and besieged by the intrigues of rival concession-hunters.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rutherford Harris's account of this journey is to be found in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of June 28, 1889.

Jameson was back at Kimberley before Rhodes returned from London, as we gather from the first of a long series of letters fortunately preserved to us by his brother, Sam, to whom they were written. Sam, it should be explained, had gone out to the Cape to assist his other brother, Julius Jameson—the beloved ‘Julie’ of the letters—then partner of a Scot called Irvine, a prosperous storekeeper of King William’s Town. From there Sam had hived off to Johannesburg to become accountant, Director of Companies, and, like everybody else, speculator. To his brother Sam, then, Jameson writes from Kimberley on May 14, 1889, which we may suppose was shortly after his return. But the letter is disappointing, since it deals chiefly with the collapse in gold-mining shares that has overtaken Johannesburg. ‘I rather admire myself,’ says Jameson, ‘for not having entered into the gamble, as I should certainly be one of those left.’ There is a reference to his practice: ‘Kimberley is better for me from a professional point of view than the Randt, at present at all events, and as I think it is likely to be for a long time, I think you had better sell the building site.’ More remarks on the slump follow, more references to fraternal investments and speculations, and then, at the end of a long letter, the only mention of the great adventure—a postscript scrawled across the page: ‘Matabeleland was a little rough; but I am glad I went, though I don’t think financially I shall be any the better.’ Merely that and nothing more! A second letter dated May 31, 1889, again from Kimberley, gives us even less. It is all about business, and nothing else, as, for example: ‘. . . Do be careful about your dealings with Barnato. I know him better than you do. He is a very good

fellow, but all the uninitiated he has helped are left with the paper and he has the money.'

But not another word of Matabeleland, not a word of that strange journey about which Sam must have been dying to hear, not a word of those negotiations about which Johannesburg and South Africa were already full of wild guesses and floating speculations.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CHARTER

'We primeval forests felling,  
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mince  
within,  
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!'

WHILE these things were happening in Matabeleland Rhodes had gone to London. His object was to put the concession on a solid footing by consolidating the rival interests in one strong Company. If the Company were to have a fair chance of success in so great a venture he saw that it should be a national Company with the influence and power of the City of London and the British Government behind it. Rhodes's conception of the British South Africa Company's work was no less great than the British Empire in India. It was to make a British Empire in Africa, not only to the Zambesi but to the Nile; and to fill the great gap between the frontiers of Cape Colony and the frontiers of Egypt.

We must remember Rhodes was not alone in this idea of settling Africa by joint-stock enterprise. The Niger Company, the Imperial East Africa Company, and the African Lakes Company were all at that time in existence. Even in the matter in hand there was already the Bechuanaland Concessions Company.

Moreover, the Germans were at work upon the same lines. German South-West Africa had been won partly by the firm of F. A. C. Luderitz of Bremen and partly by a syndicate of which the Disconto Bank of Berlin was the principal member. The German Colonial Company for South-West Africa had been formed for the development of those regions. Again, the agents of the 'Association for German Colonisation' had secured some 2500 to 3000 square miles which the German East Africa Company was created to develop. At the beginning of 1886, both in an Imperial Memorandum and in a speech in the Reichstag, Bismarck had opened out the idea of creating a German Commercial Empire in Africa by trading companies protected by the Imperial Government.

Let us glance at the position of tropical Africa as it must have appeared to Rhodes when he went to England in the spring of 1889. The interior was a great plateau stretching northwards to the lakes and the desert, and broken by several river basins of which the Limpopo, the Zambesi, the Congo, and the Niger were the chief. The low coast-lands on both sides of what was to become Rhodesia were held by Portugal, who laid claim to a large part of the interior as well. England had for centuries possessed islands and coast-lands in Western Africa, and France had an historical interest both in North-Western Africa and in Madagascar.

As to the unclaimed balance, that versatile genius, the late King of the Belgians, organised an International Conference on the subject of Tropical Africa, which was held in Brussels in September 1876. King Leopold's idea was to form a Central African Empire which would not need to be de-

fended. In 1883 the International African Association was established on a firm footing with a recognition of its rights by the Powers concerned. In November 1884 a conference of Western European Powers was convened in Berlin to consider among other things freedom of commerce in the Congo and the Niger Rivers and 'the establishment of regulations for the future acquisition of territory in Africa.' The first result of the conference was an *Acte générale* declaring freedom of commerce in the immense basin of the Congo and a maritime belt of 360 miles along the Atlantic coast. The Act declared the navigation of the Congo open to the ships of all nations even in war, and even although under an enemy's flag. In August 1885 the King of the Belgians crowned his careful and patient labours by formally assuming the sovereignty of the territories of the International African Association, 1,090,000 square miles in extent. Another result of the Berlin conference was that France was allotted 257,000 square miles in West Africa while England retained her Protectorate of the Lower Niger. Thus if Rhodes looked at Africa from the South African point of view, he saw its interior being rapidly appropriated by arrangements in which South Africa had no voice—save in the neglectful ear of Whitehall. And again, if he regarded the situation from the point of view of a possible British Empire in Africa, he saw the North being rapidly cut off from the South by an East and West movement in which Belgium, Germany, and France had a main hand. There still remained a broad and possible channel through the interior of Africa unclaimed by any Power. But even that was narrowing ominously. Were it once blocked,

the Northern and Southern possessions of the British Empire in Africa could never be united.

Now, as we can see from Rhodes's speeches at this time, these two points of view were, in his mind, one. The expansion of the Cape Colony was the expansion of the British Empire. For example, speaking to his constituents of Barkly West on September 28, 1888, six months before he went to England, he said :—

'I am tired of this mapping out of Africa at Berlin : without occupation, without development, without any claim to the position the various countries demand. My belief is that the development of South Africa should fall to that country or countries which by their progress shall show that they are best entitled to it ; and I have faith that, remote as our starting-point is, the development of Africa will occur through the Cape Colony ; that, exempt from the risks of the unhealthiness of the East and West coasts, we shall be able to obtain the dominant position throughout the interior, starting from the Cape Colony, passing through Bechuanaland, adopting the Matabele arrangement, and so on to the Zambesi ; and I have confidence that the people of the Cape Colony have the will, and the pluck, and the energy to adopt this as their inheritance.'<sup>1</sup>

At the Zambesi, or north of it, Rhodes hoped that his movement from the Cape might meet the outposts of our Empire in the North and so form one whole, united, if not in government, then in flag and by the ties of railways, telegraphs, and commerce. Such, in broad outline, was Rhodes's view when he went to England in the spring of 1889.

Now Rhodes had active opponents in England as in South Africa. Lobengula's envoys, skilfully handled by Mr. Maund, had made a great impres-

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, p. 225.

sion upon the British public in general and upon the Aborigines Protection Society in particular. The Radical Party could be trusted to agitate against any extension of the British Empire in any direction. And the Rev. John Mackenzie, always an enemy of Rhodes since Bechuanaland days, did his best to mobilise both commercial and missionary opinion against the concession.

But Rhodes had also powerful allies. In particular he had the support of Sir Hercules Robinson, now returned to London after his term of office at the Cape. Sir Hercules understood the situation and trusted Rhodes. His opinion, which had great weight in the Colonial Office, was all on the side of the concession.

And Rhodes had another ally—or should we call it servant?—capital. Capital is greatly contemned nowadays by those who do not possess it; but, rightly considered, it is one of the greatest inventions of man, the invention indeed that chiefly divides civilisation from savagery. For it enables man both to hoard the fruits of labour and to apply them where he will. From a hole in Griqualand West, by this leverage of capital, Rhodes could settle Central Africa.

‘Of course,’ he said a little later, ‘if the English public and people will help in the undertaking, all the better, because there is not only the money question, but the feeling of having the people at one’s back: but even if they do not support me I shall do it myself. A good many terms are often levelled at one’s acts and one’s nature. For instance one is called an adventurer; but I noticed when I was at the Bank of England the other day that the charter for that institution was granted to adventurers. Again, sometimes one is called a speculator. I do not deny the charge. I

remember meeting General Gordon and discussing with him why he had not taken the roomful of gold from the Emperor of China. . . . General Gordon asked me if I would have taken it, and my reply was, "Certainly, and three more roomful if I could have got them," because if one has ideas, one cannot carry them out without having wealth at one's back.'<sup>1</sup>

Rhodes arrived in London just as Maund's indunas were leaving. He set himself to form a Company which he called the British South Africa Company, the principal members of which were De Beers, which found £200,000, the Gold-fields of South Africa, and his friend Alfred Beit of Wernher, Beit and Company; and one of his first acts was to absorb in this concern all the interests and concessions of his rivals. Of these the Exploring Company had amalgamated with the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, and as part of Rhodes's arrangement two of the Directors of the latter Company, Lord Gifford and George Cawston, were given seats on his Board.

Just as in the Kimberley amalgamation, so here, Rhodes bought up interest after interest. For example, he took a hand in the African Lakes Corporation—a Company formed by Scottish business men in support of the Scottish missionaries of Nyasaland—which had done a great pioneering work in the highlands of equatorial Africa. In this Company Rhodes arranged an exchange of shares, undertaking to meet the expenses of administering its territories.

When he had formed his Company and squared or absorbed his principal competitors, Rhodes petitioned the Crown for a Royal Charter. In the letter which he addressed to Her Majesty's Government on April 30, 1889, he gave some very cogent reasons

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, pp. 819-20.

why his Company should be allowed to develop the Interior of Africa. And in recommending the scheme to the Foreign Office the Colonial Secretary gave two excellent reasons why the Charter should be granted—first, because the promoters could go forward without the Charter—‘under the Joint Stock Companies Act as they are entitled to do’; and secondly, because ‘such a body may . . . relieve Her Majesty’s Government from diplomatic difficulties and heavy expenditure.’

Her Majesty’s Government, in fact, could not fail to realise that a scramble for Africa was afoot. If they did not move themselves, somebody else would. If it were Germany or the Transvaal the result would be inconvenient and embarrassing. On the other hand, they themselves did not in the least desire to move, and as for the Cape Government, it had twice refused even to take over the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The thing had to be done sooner or later, and there was no one else except Rhodes who could do it.

These reasons were reinforced by a forcible despatch from the High Commissioner of March 18, 1889. The rivalries and intrigues of concession-hunters had reached such lengths it was impossible to keep the peace in Matabeleland as long as the question remained unsettled. Therefore the best thing to do was to confirm the Rudd concession.

Rhodes’s letter to the Imperial Government was written on April 30, 1889, a month after he arrived; a formal petition was presented by the Directors of the new Company on July 13 following; and a Royal Charter incorporating the Company was granted on October 29 of the same year.

The Charter was granted in form to the Duke of

Abercorn, the Duke of Fife, Lord Gifford, Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred Beit, Albert Henry George Grey, and George Cawston, Barrister-at-Law.

And the substance of the document was contained in one of its opening clauses :—

‘That the existence of a powerful British Company, controlled by those of Our subjects in whom We have confidence, and having its principal field of operation in that region of South Africa lying to the North of Bechuanaland and to the West of Portuguese East Africa, would be advantageous to the commercial and other interests of Our subjects in the United Kingdom and in Our Colonies.’<sup>1</sup>

Here it may be noted that while the southern and eastern boundaries of the territories are defined, its northern and western boundaries are nowhere mentioned. The omission is eloquent. It says to us plainly that Rhodes was then looking to the West for communication with the sea, and to the North for communication with Egypt.

As to the rest the Charter is benevolent in its terms ; but in its substance takes more than it gives. It imposes obligations but offers no protection. The Company is bound to submit itself in its acts and policy to ‘Our Secretary of State,’ but the Crown assumes no liability and offers no help. The Company is permitted to administer territory which in fact does not belong to Her Majesty on principles set down or to be approved by our Secretary of State, and Her Majesty reserves certain rights and powers of resumption or repeal.

But chiefly, ‘the right and power by writing under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom at the end of

<sup>1</sup> We are reminded of the annexation of the Cape by two English sailors, Shilling and Fitzherbert, in the reign of James I.—to ‘the boundary of the nearest Christian kingdom.’



twenty-five years from the date of this Our Charter, and at the end of every succeeding period of ten years, to add or alter or repeal any of the provisions of this Our Charter or to enact other provisions in substitution for or in addition to any of its existing provisions. Provided that the right and power thus reserved shall be exercised only in relation to so much of this Our Charter as relates to administrative and public matters.'

In other words, the Company is to settle and administer a territory which may some day or other become a part of the Empire, and can be annexed; but the Company is also a commercial company, and We do not claim any right over its commercial assets.

For the rest, the Charter is well calculated to disarm the latent hostility of the Aborigines Protection Society. Among the duties of the Petitioners is 'the regulation of liquor traffic with the natives' and the discouragement, and, 'as far as may be practicable,' the abolition, 'by degrees,' of the slave trade. The Company may support a body of police to maintain order, but 'shall not in any way interfere with the religion of any class or tribe of the people of the territories aforesaid . . . except so far as may be necessary in the interest of humanity.'

Taking Company and Charter together, we see the practical statesmanship of Rhodes. In the first place he provided the means to his end—the capital of the Company being a million sterling. He provided also the means whereby he amalgamated the various opposing interests—a concessionaire faced by the alternative of fighting a national Company with a million of capital or combining with it on fair terms was hardly likely to hesitate over the choice; in the third place he secured at least the benevolence

of the Imperial Government ; and in the fourth place a Directorate which included an Abercorn on the one side and a Grey on the other was fairly safe from attack by either of the great parties in the State. As to the Irish Party, whose hostility might have been expected, Rhodes was their friend and mentor. A year before he had given Parnell a contribution of £10,000 upon certain conditions. These conditions did not concern the settlement of Central Africa. They were concerned rather with Rhodes's ideas of the government of the Empire. Still, £10,000 is £10,000 ; the Irish Party had no reason to quarrel with Cecil Rhodes.

The only elements in British politics left un-placated were certain Radicals like Mr. Labouchere, then editor of *Truth* and Member for Northampton. With him and his friends we shall have to deal more particularly later on. In the meantime, with a Conservative Government in power, they did not greatly matter. Rhodes could boast when he returned to South Africa that the British Government and the British public were behind him in his enterprise.

## CHAPTER IX

### PREPARATIONS

'Nature, that hateth emptiness,  
Allows of penetration less,  
And therefore must make room  
Where greater spirits come.'

MARVELL.

JAMESON, as we already know, left the presence of the King on April 12, 1889. After Jameson came Johann Frederick Dreyer, the transport-rider, with the balance of the rifles and ammunition in twenty wagons. Dreyer delivered the rifles to Thompson, and Thompson delivered them to the King, and then Dreyer also left, driving before him 750 head of cattle for the Transvaal. Yet despite this fulfilment of the contract, the enemies of the concession began to gain ground, with their propaganda of 'Matabeleland for the Matabele.' The indunas and the young regiments now freely accused the King of selling the country to the white man, and these accusations grew bolder day by day until even the King himself began to be alarmed. He looked for a scapegoat, and found one in Leshie, the old induna who had chiefly supported Rudd. Lobengula had an ancient grudge against Leshie, for Leshie had taken sides against him long before when his right to the throne was in dispute; and Leshie was unpopular with the army, for he had led a regiment

to defeat near Lake Ngami at the hands of the Bechuanas. Leshie, then, was put upon his trial, one of the chief counts against him being that he had advised the King to sign the concession. The old councillor was found guilty and was put to death.

Thompson had been visiting Hope Fountain Mission Station, and was driving back to the King's kraal when the news reached him. Remembering the fate which had befallen his father, Thompson drew up at Dawson's store, which lay just outside the royal kraal, borrowed a saddle, cut out the swiftest horse of his span of four, and rode until it came to a stand some 18 miles out of Tati. These remaining 18 miles he walked.

At Tati Thompson heard that Dreyer was still at the Crocodile River, waiting for the drought to break before he went on with his cattle. He drove out to Dreyer with a horse and six mules which he had picked up at Tati and begged the transport driver to go with him to Mafeking.

The flight threatened to ruin the whole scheme. As long as it remained unretrieved the name of Rhodes would be dirt in the King's kraal. And it left at Buluwayo the dreaded 'vacuum.'<sup>1</sup>

Rhodes had returned from London about the end of August 1889, and to fill this vacuum with all possible speed and in the best possible way was now his only thought. Thompson telegraphed from Tati, and his message, as may be supposed, was black: the situation looked desperate. Rhodes in his distress thought of his friend Jameson. The Doctor had gone once; he might go again.

<sup>1</sup> Not quite a vacuum, however, for by that time one or two of the concession-hunters who had previously been working at the kraal for themselves or other syndicates were attached to the Rhodes-Rudd interest.

A letter—unfortunately mutilated—from Jameson to his brother Julie shows that the Doctor at this time did not particularly want to go.

'KIMBERLEY, *August 14, 1889.*

'DEAR JULIE, . . . Rhodes and Maguire are on the water and will be here on Saturday fortnight, Rhodes according to present arrangement to go up country at once. I don't want to go again and don't see that there will be any ne. . . but if anything is to . . . by it I should go. An interest in the . . . I believe I shall hav. . . ultimately, though . . . all in the "clouds" . . . have been going w. . . at home and I believe . . . going to be a big suc. . . there is a lot of settle. . . done in Matabelel. . . Boom ahead . . . and I hear still more so . . . As to the silvers I think you are quite right to get rid of them as you are able. De Pass and Barney had a talk about running them . . . but then we should be left with the scrip and they with the money,' etc.<sup>1</sup>

A second letter to Julie from Kimberley is dated September 19, 1889, which must have been just before Rhodes appealed to him:—

' . . . In re the election I have already promised to do what I can for Longe ; but will not make it at all obtrusive, and shall not quarrel with the Barnato crowd . . . one of the family is quite enough for us at present. . . Things going all right *re* Matabeleland, but I am not going up at present. . . '

These letters show that Jameson had no great wish to go to Buluwayo again when Rhodes approached him. But according to Mr. Seymour Fort when Rhodes read the telegram from Thompson Jameson said upon the instant, 'I will go.' 'When

<sup>1</sup> A strip of this letter has been torn off, possibly for the signature, leaving a hiatus at the end of every line on one page ; but the missing words are easily supplied.

will you start ? ' Rhodes asked, and Jameson replied, ' To-morrow morning.' <sup>1</sup>

In these few words Destiny wrote great decrees.

Jameson volunteered to go in order to save the project from certain disaster. It appears from chance references in the letters that he already had an interest in the Company and to that extent was financially concerned in its success ; but he went without any agreement or promise of reward. Rhodes gave him full power in writing to act for the Company with the King in any way he thought fit, and also sent with him two men with experience of natives, although they did not know the Matabele — Denis Doyle and Major Maxwell.<sup>2</sup> With these companions Jameson went posthaste to Mafeking. There he met Thompson and Dreyer.

Jameson's first act was to send Dreyer to Tati with a letter for Sam Edwards, asking that veteran to ask Lobengula—in Matabele language—to give him the road. Dreyer set out with the cart and six mules, and when they broke down at the Crocodile River he pushed on with a single horse to Tati, which he reached in four days. There he delivered his message to Edwards, who sent runners to the King. Then Jameson arrived with Doyle, Maxwell, and Thompson, whom he had persuaded to return ; they received the King's leave to go on, and

<sup>1</sup> Fort's *Dr. Jameson*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> 'The position then was that if Thompson's flight was to be a confirmed flight the reign of the Chartered Company in Matabeleland had come to an untimely end. Rhodes did not know what to do. Lanner volunteered to go up with Doyle and Maxwell. Doyle and Maxwell it had been arranged before to send up ; but Rhodes was certain that they would now back out, and Lanner came forward and went to these men, and his persuasion and example gave them heart. Doyle is a skilled interpreter and Maxwell a good-natured Guffy but knows the natives a little. So the trio went off.'—Sam Jameson to Lizzie Jameson (Johannesburg, April 12, 1890).

Jameson asked Dreyer to take charge of the wagons. 'Don't break my neck,' he said gaily, 'going over the sluits and the mountains.'

On October 17, 1889, they arrived at the King's kraal, and Edwards, who had come with them, presented Jameson to the King as Rhodes's representative. The King was in a bad temper.

'What good,' he said, 'is it telling me any more lies? I will not be satisfied unless I can see Rhodes himself.'

Edwards, however, whom Lobengula trusted, assured the King that Rhodes could not come then, but would come later. At this moment Thompson walked up and the King burst out again, 'I don't want to see that man. He has told me too many lies. I don't want to have anything to do with him.' Nor would he ever again see Thompson. 'A man does, no doubt, what his heart tells him to do,' he said, 'but he ran away without cause, and I do not want to see him more.'

So Thompson went.

Part at least of Lobengula's ill-nature at this time was due to that familiar of monarchs, the gout. For Lobengula ate a great deal of beef, drank a great deal of native beer, and took very little exercise. Dr. Jameson by injections of morphia gave the King immediate ease, and by a course of treatment reduced the malady to such a degree that the patient was sensibly relieved.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Jameson's buoyancy, his charm, his never-failing chaff and good-humour, fairly won

<sup>1</sup> 'It has been the custom for some years, since the King had the gout first, at each attack to consult the Witch Doctor and smell out a few individuals who have convenient property in cattle. This year Lanner impressed the King that his gout came from up above and it was specially sent to the great Kings in Europe and was the result of over brain work

Lobengula's heart, and the Doctor and the Monarch soon became fast friends. As the favourite physicians of European potentates are sometimes made knights and baronets, so Lobengula made Dr. Jameson an induna and arrayed him in the ostrich-feather cloak and the ox-tail garters of a Matabele notable. Then the tremendous monarch, with the slight figure of the Doctor beside him, received the Matabele army—the paraded impi beating their ox-hide shields with their heavy assegais, chanting their war songs, and dancing their war dances.

From October 17 to December 10 Jameson remained at Lobengula's kraal. By then he had gained great influence not only over Lobengula but over a large number of his people. We have the testimony of eye-witnesses on this point. 'A man was here the other day,' his brother Sam writes to Lizzie, 'who has just come down from there—Mr. Mandy. He speaks most enthusiastically of Lanner's influence and work up there. He says, "Your brother is an entirely different class of man from any of the rest of us who have been with Lobengula, and I am very sorry he came down. We won't get into the country properly until he goes up again."'

Jameson's policy was to get the King's assent to one main object of the concession, to dig for gold; next to get men actually at work. Then Rhodes could say that the concession was operating. This permission Jameson secured on December 10, and twelve hours after he had a large party digging on

and too little exercise. The King took to the idea and gave a hint to the Witch Doctor that when the indunas asked him which was to blame this year for the gout he had better blame Providence, which he accordingly did, and for the first time for some years a severe attack of gout has taken place and not a single life sacrificed,'—Sam Jameson to Lizzie Jameson (April 12, 1890).



the Tati gold-fields, 90 miles away. When he returned to Buluwayo—on December 15—he opened his second objective, to obtain the King's permission for the great trek into Mashonaland. This also the King granted, and Jameson even got leave to bring a prospector, one Tom Maddox, into Matabeleland forthwith. Either for this purpose or to get a second party going at Tati, Jameson left for that place on December 23, but was back again at the royal kraal on January 4, 1890. He wrote from Incogone on January 8 to his favourite brother, 'Midge':—

'DEAR MIDGE, — Your letter forwarded to me by last post. I am up here among the savages, as you say, and am likely to be for another couple of months. I came up on emergency business intending to stay a week, but one thing after another crops up to keep me. So far have been very successful with the King in getting a peaceable settlement, though there is a great probability of ructions in the future ; but by that time I shall be out of the country.

' Rhodes had behaved very generously to me in getting me a decent share ; so I was very glad of the opportunity of being of some use in return. The danger is very much exaggerated. At present all very friendly, though of course at any time they may turn the other way ; but even then I don't believe any danger to life of white men—sometimes annoying in threatening, etc., but that is all. A funny life, living in a wagon in the bush with the pure unadulterated savage—which they are. Very healthy, but not very luxurious. Am going to try a little hunting on the way out, if business does not necessitate a hurried journey down.' Then follows a passage on the death of Julius Jameson—'a very sad business'—and the letter continues :

' Re money matters, my finances are still complicated, so have not sent any lately but trusted to my former request to you that you would always give me due notice when you wanted cash. I instructed my partner Hillier to open all

letters from France, and if the slightest indication of hard-up-ness to send you a hundred.

'I have a good share in this business which ought to be worth a lot of money. Of course one could sell now, but that would be idiotic when things are going on so well, and I consider the thing assured with this Royal Charter granted and everything going well here. Since I have been here I have already started two parties at work with the King's permission, and by the middle of the year we ought to be in full swing ; and by the end of the year the shares at any price. Then I hope to put things square for you too, as I always intended. In the meantime my cash is required for first payments in ; but I hope by this time you have applied and Hillier will have remitted. You will be sorry to hear that Bovie is dead. I still keep some De Beers as my Consols—am determined never to be on my bottom again.—Yrs.,  
L. S. JAMESON.'

From this letter one might suppose that Jameson's motive in working for Rhodes's plans was simply finance and gratitude to Rhodes for getting in—as financiers say—upon the ground floor. But it is fair to warn the reader that Jameson's habit was to take as much pains to conceal all lofty and generous motives as most men commonly take to display them.<sup>1</sup>

To resume the chain of events at the King's kraal in those eventful months of the end of 1889 and the beginning of 1890.

Queen Victoria, after the visit of Lobengula's indunas to London in the previous year, had sent a mission of her own Guards to the King. These—Major Meladew, Major Gascoyne, Captain Ferguson,

<sup>1</sup> 'I have ascertained that the Doctor received in 1890 an allotment of 4500 shares in the Chartered Company and that he sold these between May 1891 and January 1892. The average price of the shares between these two dates was between £2 and £3.—Letter to the Author from Mr. D. O. Malcolm, a Director of the Chartered Company. As Jameson paid for the shares at the price on allotment, his 'good share in the business' was in fact a mere trifle.

and Corporal-Major Short created a great sensation in Buluwayo when they appeared in full uniform—red coats, breast-plates, shining helmets, top-boots, and all. Unfortunately the letter which they carried had been written by some rather dull official and was in fact ‘unintelligible rubbish.’ Jameson, who never stood upon any official punctilio, persuaded the mission to give him the letter, rewrote it in a style calculated to please a savage monarch, and had it translated. It was then read to the King with excellent effect. By these and other attentions the situation was now so improved that Jameson felt himself able to leave Doyle and Maxwell in charge, and left for Kimberley on February 14.

Meantime Rhodes was busying himself with considerations of how to occupy Mashonaland. In London he had talked the matter over with Selous; but negotiations had not then gone far enough for any definite engagement, and when Rhodes returned to South Africa Selous had gone to Mashonaland. Rhodes then consulted Colonel Carrington, in command of the Bechuanaland Police. Carrington offered to undertake the job if he were given 2500 men and the rank of Major General. Rhodes had no wish to see the money required for the development of the country wasted in military display, and with painful recollections of the Warren Expedition—he never forgot Warren—had a suspicion that Carrington might make a war in order to make a reputation.

Perplexed by these anxieties, he was sitting moodily over his breakfast in the Kimberley Club when his eye lighted on a face he knew. It was Frank Johnson.

Frank Johnson, the son of a doctor in Norfolk,

was born in the year 1866, and ran away to sea when a boy. At seventeen he found himself in Table Bay and engaged himself as a clerk in the Table Bay Harbour Board. He became an enthusiastic volunteer in that famous Cape Town regiment, the Duke of Edinburgh's Rifles, and when the Rev. John Mackenzie was agitating in Cape Town on the wickedness of the Transvaal Boers, young Johnson determined to go up and make an end of them. Accordingly he joined Carrington's Horse as a sergeant, and became Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant in the Second Mounted Rifles. In August 1885 he was transferred to the Bechuanaland Border Police, and took part in a small expedition which was sent up to bring Montsioa back from Khama's country where he had taken refuge from the Boers.

At Shoshong Johnson saw gold dust in vulture quills which had come from the natives of the interior, and was fired by the desire to discover its source. He therefore wrote to his old chief of the Harbour Board, John Saunders, and proposed an arrangement by which Saunders should provide him with £500 and they should go half shares in what he discovered. Saunders, in his turn, formed the Northern Gold-fields Exploration Syndicate by inducing twenty-two of the leading citizens of Cape Town to put down £25 each, and sent the money up to Johnson. Johnson thereupon bought a wagon and a team of donkeys and took with him four of his particular friends of the Police—Sergeant Heany, Lance-Corporal Spreckley, Corporal Borrow, and Ted Burnett.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Heany we shall hear more later. Spreckley became Colonel Spreckley; Corporal Borrow fell with Wilson; and Burnett—then Captain—also fell in the First Matabele War.

Johnson's first move was to visit Khama, the famous Chief of the Bamangwato. This remarkable man had come to the conclusion that if he did not bend before the advance of the white man he must break, and followed a policy of letting the white man into his country under careful regulations, one of which was that no liquor was to be sold to his people. From Khama Johnson obtained a concession of mineral rights, and this concession was in the end sold to the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, of which Johnson became local Managing Director.

Leaving Heany and Borrow behind him to look after Bechuanaland, Johnson struck north in search of the country whence came the quills of gold. From Lobengula he obtained a concession—against the wishes of his indunas—to seek for gold in Mashonaland, where the gold dust, as he discovered, was washed out of the beds of the Mazoe and other swift-running tributaries of the Zambesi.

The hostility of the indunas was, however, too much for Johnson. He was tried on a charge of murdering the Matabele with 'white poison,' and was forced to return to Bechuanaland. There he worked for the Bechuanaland Exploration Company as their Managing Director until that Company threw him over when it came to an arrangement with Rhodes. The Company had no further need of him, but Rhodes realised he was just the man he wanted.

And so it came about that Rhodes opened his heart to Johnson, there in the Kimberley Club, dwelling particularly upon Carrington's demand for 2500 men.

'Pooh!' said Johnson, more to comfort Rhodes than with any serious intention, 'give me 250 men and I'll walk through the country!'

‘ You will ? ’ said Rhodes.

‘ Of course I will,’ said Johnson.

‘ And what will it cost ? ’

Johnson now saw his boast was being taken more seriously than he intended. But, ashamed to go back on it, he replied, ‘ Give me till tiffin-time, and I’ll work it out.’

Rhodes forthwith gave him an office and a sheet of paper, and Johnson worked out details of equipment and supply on lines with which he had become familiar as Quartermaster-Sergeant of the Mounted Rifles. By lunch his calculations were complete, and he laid before Rhodes’s eyes sheets of detailed expenditure totalling £97,400.

Rhodes was delighted. ‘ Right,’ he said. ‘ You go, Johnson, you command the force ! You go ! ’ And he kept on repeating ‘ You go ! ’ in the manner he had when excited.

But Johnson had one objection which he thought insuperable. He believed that he had been served very badly by the London Board of the Bechuana-land Exploration Company and as Lord Gifford and Cawston were now on the Board of the British South Africa Company he refused to serve under them. From this resolution Rhodes could not shake him.

Johnson went to Cape Town, and a week or so afterwards had a telegram from Rhodes asking him to meet him at the Cape Town railway station. The train from Kimberley in those days arrived early in the morning. Rhodes jumped out and together they went to Government Avenue. There, under the oaks between the gardens planted by old Van Riebeeck, they walked up and down from 7.30 until 9.30, Rhodes using every conceivable argument to shake the other’s resolution.

At last, worn down by the other's pertinacity, Johnson exclaimed, 'Give me a cheque for £97,400 and I'll hand you over the country fit for civil government. I shall then be a contractor and not a servant of the British South Africa Company.'

Rhodes walked on for about two hundred yards as though he had not heard the remark, and then said suddenly:—

'I'll give you that cheque.'

To which Johnson, nigh famished, replied, 'All right then, let's go and have breakfast.'

They went to Poole's Hotel, and Rhodes behaved like a schoolboy.

In the two hundred yards which Rhodes walked before he gave Johnson an answer he must have thought over a good many considerations. A contract was something he liked and understood much better than an army. If his show were to be run by a general and a staff—or so he argued—all drawing full pay, everybody would try to make the business as long and as important and as costly as possible. They might even try to develop it from an expedition into a war as the unforgettable Warren had tried to do in 1885. But if Johnson had a contract to deliver—so to speak—the Pioneers at Mount Hampden, he would naturally try to get the thing done as expeditiously and with as little fighting as possible. A fight with the Matabele on the way was what Rhodes most dreaded, and Johnson might be trusted not to dissipate any of his profits in avoidable fighting.

Rhodes, then, signed his first cheque for £20,000 with a light heart, confident that he had done a good deal, and set to work to get the Pioneer force together. To Johnson and others who were charged

with recruiting the force he gave two general directions. One was that the men should be recruited from every district in South Africa, including the two Republics. Rhodes calculated that if every dorp and district had one or two young men in the Pioneer force the sentiment of the whole country would be naturally engaged in the success of the adventure. That this was in his mind is shown by the fact that he made exceptions both for Kimberley and Cape Town, for he knew that he had these two communities behind him already.

His second general direction was that the young men should be not only picked men and first-class shots and horsemen, but should make up a self-contained community—including members of every trade and profession—so that when it should come to disperse in a country a thousand miles away from civilisation it might be able to fend for itself. In fact, it was with a nation in miniature that Rhodes was preparing to occupy the North.



## CHAPTER X

### AT THE KING'S KRAAL

'We must march, my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,  
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!'

THE force of circumstances was pressing Jameson more and more into the service of this great adventure. He had entered into it as a friend in whom Rhodes trusted and confided; but in the two embassies he had proved himself the one man of the courage, skill, and judgment necessary to such an enterprise. There is evidence that Rhodes tried to get along without Jameson, probably because Rhodes deemed it unfair to engage his friend further unless necessity demanded. Jameson, after all, was still a physician, and to withdraw him altogether from his practice was a responsibility which even Rhodes—who never shirked responsibility—would go some way to avoid. The Doctor, in fact, was held in reserve, as a last resource.

Probably Rhodes hoped to find a substitute in the big-game hunter, Frederick Courtney Selous, whom he consulted in London in the spring of 1889. Here was a gentleman, a man to be trusted, and besides a man who knew both Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Selous had gone first to Matabeleland in 1872, the year after Rhodes had gone to Kimberley, and had asked leave of Lobengula to shoot great game in his country. He was then a

stripling of nineteen, and the King answered him with good-natured contempt, 'Go where you will; you are only a boy!' And Selous, going where grown men feared to go, had shot elephant and lion, buffalo and rhinoceros, eland and hartebeest in what was then the best of all great-game countries—Mashonaland.

He was daring, wary, hard, and keen, this hunter, who made his living by selling the tusks of the elephants and the skin and horns of the rarer antelopes he shot. So he went on year by year, living on the veld, collecting for museums, shooting for the ivory market, risking his life among wild beasts and hardly less savage tribes, measuring his wits against the unknown, until he had become best and most famous of the big-game hunters of that great Zambesi country.

After his talk with Rhodes in London, Selous left with a prospecting party for his favourite hunting-ground, the headwaters of the Mazoe Valley in North-Eastern Mashonaland. On his return to Cape Town, he went, as he had promised, to see Rhodes, then at Kimberley, and laid before him his plan for the occupation of Mashonaland by a new road striking eastward from the Bechuanaland border to Tuli and leaving the Matabele well to the north and west. Rhodes, who had never considered any other than the hunter's road through Buluwayo, recognised at once that Selous's route enormously lessened the risk of war with the Matabele. It was therefore adopted, and Selous himself appointed guide to the expedition. For destination, Selous suggested the hill he had named Mount Hampden, as it was the centre of a great grassy plain which had appeared to him, when he saw it, fertile and full of promise.

Now Jameson, after settling things to his mind with the King, had come down from Buluwayo for the second time on February 14, 1890, leaving Denis Doyle and Major Maxwell with the King. But his settlement was upset by an unwise interference. Part of the arrangement, it should be explained, was that Colenbrander, another of Rhodes's agents, was to meet Selous at Palapye with 100 Matabele labourers to help in making the road. Selous was at Palapye by March 1890, but the labourers did not arrive, and Selous, growing impatient, 'resolved with his customary courage,' as Michell says, 'to beard the Matabele monarch at his capital.' He found the King 'like a fractious child.'

'His denial,' so Michell continues, 'that he had granted Dr. Jameson a right-of-way was not shaken by the reminder of a reliable witness, Mr. Denis Doyle, who had been present on the occasion. He absolutely refused to allow a road to be made,' and asked that Selous should 'go back and take Rhodes by the hand and bring him here.'<sup>1</sup> Selous's impatient intervention had done more harm than good. Lobengula was no man to be hustled.

With this disconcerting news Selous returned to Kimberley. Rhodes was willing enough to go, but was overruled by his friends, who reminded him that he was indispensable at the base of operations. The only alternative was—for the third time—Jameson.

Two letters to his brother Sam, written just before he left, show Jameson's attitude of mind. He had made an arrangement with the King; the incompetence of Rhodes's agents and Selous's impatient intervention had upset it. Rhodes and Selous had both besought him to set matters straight. He was

<sup>1</sup> Michell's *Life of Rhodes*, vol. i. pp 297-8.

nettled, but nevertheless, 'as a favour,' consented. In the first letter, written from Kimberley on April 9, 1890, he explains his situation. He writes:—

'Rhodes has been away in the veld for a week and only returned late last night.' And he continues: 'Selous is here, and in conjunction with some incompetence up above seems to have got my previous arrangements into a bit of a mess. So very probably I may go back with him at the beginning of the week; but as I told you it will be as a favour and distinctly requested. Otherwise I go on calmly with my practice here. I don't care which way it is much, and it is rather amusing the perfectly friendly finessing in the meantime. S. very anxious that I should go and R. afraid to ask and not quite sure that it is necessary. Keep all this to yourself.'

The next letter, dated April 10, 1890, was written from the Kimberley Club after the decision had been made:—

'I leave for Buluwayo on Sunday morning, having carried out to the letter what I told you in Johannesburg. R. was very nice in every way when screwed up to the point, and I had my say out thoroughly and an acknowledgment that I had been right from the word "Go." I am going to try and get things back to the point that I left them and then leave at once; probably to come back here or possibly to go into Mashonaland. . . . Selous goes back with me, but probably only as far as Palapye—as he is not a *persona grata* with Loben, and I am sure I could do better alone. It will be a beastly cold journey; but I am very glad to go, as I feel very uncomfortable at my swagger arrangements being upset, and am sufficiently interested in it to wish to see a success.'

And Jameson wrote also to 'Midge,' the artist:—

'I leave for Buluwayo again in a couple of days, for a short trip I hope this time. Old Lobengula is a shift

customer, and as I have got on pretty well with him before, the powers that be consider I will be best able to finish up arrangements with him. I hate the beastly cold journey, but am interested financially and otherwise sufficiently to wish to see a success as soon as possible. This ought to be my last trip to the old savage ; but should it turn out well I shall probably after my return to report go on to Mashonaland. That will be interesting, and then I hope my long-delayed shooting trip will come off. . . . Practice, as you may suppose, I have pretty well given up with these repeated interior journeys, and if things turn out well I don't suppose I shall take to it again. However, it is a good stand-by for bread and butter if things go wrong,' etc.

Jameson and Selous started from Kimberley on April 11 and went together as far as Tati. There Jameson persuaded Selous to turn back on the plea that his work was to guide the expedition, and went on alone. He reached the royal kraal on April 27 upon the last and most critical of his diplomatic visits.

It is not to be supposed that all this time Rhodes had ever left a vacuum at Buluwayo. Not only was Moffat, the Imperial Resident, constantly going to and fro, but, as we have seen, Major Maxwell and Mr. Doyle had remained with the King. 'Matabele' Wilson and his partner Chadwick, who had been for several years in Buluwayo both trading and in pursuit of a concession, were now working in the interest of the Chartered Company, and with them was Dawson, the trader, who, however, had gone South, sick of fever, before Jameson arrived. Colenbrander was also in Buluwayo in the same interest. But, skilful and experienced as some of these men were, none of them stood with the King on the same footing as the man who had come to be known in Matabeleland as Rhodes's Mouth. By all accounts Dr.

Jameson fascinated Lobengula, as he fascinated most men with whom he came in contact. He had with his magical hypodermic needle conjured away those horrid twinges of gout. But there was something more. Here was a Little Man who had no fear, who laughed as no man had ever laughed before in the King's presence, a man of unprecedented frankness of speech and eye. Lobengula liked Jameson.

The King was at this time in a very difficult and delicate situation. He had, like his neighbour Khama, long realised that the march of the white man was inevitable, and that he must either bend or break. His two indunas recently returned from England had brought with them awed impressions of the white man's numbers, cleverness, and power; and the magnificent mission of Life-guardsmen impressively reinforced these reports. He knew, then, that it was in vain to oppose his impis to the power which had destroyed Cetewayo and driven Mosilikatsi into the wilderness. But his untravelled army was by no means of the same way of thinking. As rumours of Rhodes's preparations came up from the South, they grew ever more turbulent and threatening. Was not the army invincible? Was it not fifteen thousand strong? Let it bathe its assegais in the blood of the white man.

When Jameson arrived upon his last visit, he found the King in an enigmatic mood. But he obtained from him nevertheless some sort of promise that the Pioneers would be allowed to make their way to Mashonaland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Seymour Fort has a picturesque account of the last meeting:—

<sup>2</sup> After two days spent in vain, he arranged to leave the next morning at daybreak, but before starting, as a final effort, went to Lobengula to say good-bye.

<sup>3</sup> The door of the Chief's hut was in two portions, an upper and a lower,

On May 2 Jameson left the royal kraal, and the following letter to Sam gives an account of his visit :—

‘PALATYE, May 29, ’80.

‘DEAR SAM,—I have been to Buluwayo and many other places—fairly satisfactory interviews with Loben—days of it, and mutual threats, but ending in an admission of all he had promised me before. For last few weeks knocking about with Selous arranging route to be followed, etc., etc., and intend to go in with party. Don’t think there will be fighting ; but you never know. In any case we will be in this winter. . . . I am going nap on the Charter, and that means for finances at present nap on the success of this expedition. Pennefather is a capital fellow with plenty of dash and I think will carry it through successfully. Will let you know how things go on as opportunity occurs.’

Now when Jameson went away, besides the white men already mentioned there were certain traders, Petersen, Tainton, and Johnny Halyott, and Reilly who represented the Rennie Tailyour Concession, and a prospector, called Tom Maddox, for whom Jameson had obtained permission to search for gold, all in Matabeleland. Before Jameson left, he warned these white men to leave the country, and,

and leaning over the lower half he had his last and final interview. The old King was stark naked, somewhat agitated—an unwieldy mass of dark copper-coloured flesh moving restlessly up and down within the dim, uncertain light of the hut.

“Well, King,” said Jameson, “as you will not confirm your promise and grant me the road, I shall bring my white impi and if necessary we shall fight.”

Lobengula replied, “I never refused the road to you and to your impi.”

“Very well,” said Jameson, “then you acknowledge that you have promised to grant me the road ; and unless you refuse it now, your promise holds good.” Then, as the King remained diplomatically silent, Jameson said, “Good-bye, Chief, you have given your promise about the road, and on the strength of that promise I shall bring in my impi to Matabeleland,” and he left.

“This was the last time those two saw each other.”—*Dr. Jameson*, pp. 94-95

in particular, he asked Matabele Wilson to go with him and join the Pioneers.

After Jameson's departure, Doyle and Wilson and Chadwick, who saw the wisdom of leaving, went to the King to 'ask for the road,' telling him tactfully that Kimberley was the place of their desire.

Then the King in a burst of passion replied, 'You lie. You want to go with the white impi that is going into my country. You must stay here. Do you hear?'

Wilson answered, 'No, I do not hear.'

And the King said in a voice charged with menace, 'Well, go.'

Chadwick inspanned his wagon, and attempted to leave; but was met by thirty Matabele warriors, who stopped his oxen with raised assegais, whereupon Wilson said, 'Now we know where we are. We are prisoners here.'

In this situation the white men received a letter from Jameson, advising them to go as the Pioneers were on the march and there might be trouble. If they stayed, they did so at their own risk.

Wilson and Chadwick then busied themselves to get the missionaries and their wives out of the country; but the missionaries replied, 'We are men of peace.' And the King said, 'There will be no trouble for the white men in this country as long as the missionaries remain.'

So the white men remained, but in fear of their lives. For the great kraal was seething with excitement, and every day the young *mjakas* threatened Wilson and his friends, shaking their assegais and telling them that their day was at hand.

In the midst of this turmoil the faithful Dreyer



arrived with two wagons in which were two magnificent white young shorthorn bulls specially picked by the Duke of Abercorn as a present for the King. The King was known to have a kingly love of cattle. He had said to Jameson, 'Can a man be happy without cows and bulls?' And there was besides a symbolical value in the gift at this critical moment, for by Matabele custom white cattle meant peace.

These bulls had been sent from England to Kimberley by steamer and rail, and had been taken on from Kimberley to Buluwayo by wagon without once putting their feet on the ground. Dreyer had been threatened on the way; he had been surrounded by a great force of Matabele warriors who had chased his boys under the wagons and had threatened to kill him. In this critical position he was saved by an old witch-doctor, who came and threw his knuckle-bones in the dust and said to the impi, 'Do you mean to kill this white man?' They said, 'We do.' Then the witch-doctor pointed to the white bulls in the wagon, and said, 'Could any man among you lift these bulls?' They said, 'No.' Then said the witch-doctor, 'Here is a white man, a youngster, who lifted these bulls on to the wagon. He is strong. If you kill him you will be *loya* and scattered as the wind scatters the dust.' So the transport-rider had been allowed to go on, and now he presented the oxen to the King. The King—beneath a white umbrella held over him by a slave—came out of his kraal and inspected the bulls with the eye of a connoisseur.

'Why,' he demanded presently, 'did you not bring me a white bull and a red bull?'

When Dreyer asked him to explain, he said, 'A red bull stands for an enemy and a white bull for

a friend,' his meaning being that peace and war were still in the balance.

At this moment the young bulls, released after their long journey on wagon-board, began to fight, and the King became greatly excited. Then said he, 'You have given me the bulls, now I want the wagon,' so Dreyer gave him the wagon and the oxen and the trek gear, and everything that belonged to the bulls.

The King—as monarchs will—soon grew tired of his new toys; the bulls were turned out upon the veld, and, being unused to those sparse pastures, within three months they were dead.

As for Dreyer, he went back to Palapye and told Jameson that the King had accepted the bulls. 'That's all right,' said Jameson, looking very pleased. 'That will save us a lot of trouble.'

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PIONEERS

'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—  
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go !

IN the meantime Rhodes had been going steadily forward with the preparations for the great advance. These preparations were both political and practical. On the political side his aim was to have a united Cape Colony behind him. The key to this support was Jan Hofmeyr, the wary and astute leader of the Cape Dutch party organised in the Afrikander Bond. Jan Hofmeyr's first idea was to use Rhodes's schemes to bring Kruger to terms upon quite another subject. It had been part of the President's policy to exclude Cape Colonial produce from the Transvaal by means of high Customs duties, and Hofmeyr, alert in the interest of his farmers, now saw a chance of getting this tariff removed. In June and July 1889 we find him warning Kruger of Rhodes's plans to push a railway from Kimberley north through Bechuanaland along the Transvaal border. Hofmeyr was prepared to use his influence in the Cape Parliament to obstruct the scheme if Kruger upon his side would grant Free Trade to the Colony and would allow the Cape Railway system to be pushed through the Orange Free State to Johannesburg, Pretoria, the Limpopo, and the Western Transvaal.

President Kruger rejected this proposal. By the end of October 1889, the first sod of the Delagoa

Bay railway in Transvaal territory was turned : the Transvaal Volksraad hardened its heart against the Cape, and Hofmeyr was thereby 'compelled,' as his biographer points out, 'to give his support to Mr. Rhodes's projects.'<sup>1</sup> His support was the support of the Cape Dutch. 'If,' said the President of the Bond (at that time a Mr. Botha), 'Mr. Rhodes and his people are in charge, it is all right.'

Rhodes, the new High Commissioner (Sir Henry Loch) and the Cape Government now entered upon a three-cornered negotiation for the extension of the railway from Kimberley to the northern border of British Bechuanaland by way of Vryburg and Mafeking. Hofmeyr, hoping against hope that the Transvaal might relent, delayed the business for a time; but by January 23, 1890, the necessary agreements were signed. On consideration of building the railway, the Imperial Government made a grant to the Company of land in Bechuanaland; on the security of the land, the Cape Government advanced the money to build the railway, an ingenious arrangement in which we recognise the master-hand of Rhodes.

There was still the Transvaal to reckon with, and the burghers of the Northern Transvaal were now busily preparing for their great trek into Matabeleland. Rhodes met this movement by inviting the burghers of the Transvaal to join his Pioneers. But there is evidence also that he tried to meet Kruger in a broad general settlement. The Transvaal was to be allowed to annex Swaziland, which lies between that State and the sea, and also to obtain a harbour at Kosi Bay, undertaking on her

<sup>1</sup> See *Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr* by J. H. Hofmeyr, chapters xx. and xxii.

side not to interfere with the British South Africa Company on the North. The Transvaal, moreover, was to grant Free Trade in Colonial products, and to meet the Colony in the development of the Cape railway system. We may see that Rhodes had a hand in these proposals from the fact that when Sir Henry Loch, the new High Commissioner, met Paul Kruger to discuss this settlement, Cecil Rhodes was a member of the conference.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the previous conduct of the Transvaal in Zululand and elsewhere not only towards the natives but also towards British traders had exasperated public opinion in England, and when news of this settlement got about there was a great agitation against it. It went so far that the British Government modified its proposals to an impossible sort of joint government for Swaziland instead of simple annexation by the Transvaal. These and other changes were embodied in a convention which Sir Henry Loch and Jan Hofmeyr pressed Paul Kruger to accept.

The President objected that if he agreed to such terms his burghers would certainly repudiate them and him. In the end a partial settlement was reached, neither full enough nor free enough for the permanent peace of South Africa. But it had at least this good effect, that it bound the Transvaal Government not to interfere in the North.

Things being thus settled, as far as could be, both in rear and in front, for the next great step, the way was clear. The force which was to occupy the promised land could now be set in motion. It consisted of two main bodies, Pioneers and the Police.

<sup>1</sup> The meeting took place at Blignaut's Pont on the Vaal River on March 12 and 13, 1890. This was the third meeting of Rhodes and Kruger.

As for the Pioneer Corps, the settlers had been selected on the plan already described. By the beginning of May 140 young settlers were concentrated at Kimberley with Captain Johnson in command. They were such men as Rhodes loved, of British blood in the main, of all classes, artisans and working miners rubbing shoulders with cadets of good families—some famous English cricketers among them—with a sprinkling of likely young Dutchmen—in the springtime of youth, and fired by the great adventure.

At daybreak on May 6, 1890, the Pioneer Corps left Kenilworth, a suburb of Kimberley, on the first stage of the trek to the North. Their immediate destination was the camp which Selous had prepared near Macloutsi on the bare, barren, thorn-sprinkled frontier of British Bechuanaland. Jameson arrived at Palapye on May 27 with Selous, who had ridden out to meet him on the road, and all things were got ready for the venture.

The expedition consisted altogether of some 200 Pioneers and 500 Mounted Police with a few Volunteers and a large contingent of coloured boys and native labourers—in all, as Michell estimates, perhaps 1000 souls. The Imperial Government had insisted that the force should be under an Army officer, and should be passed by the Cape Command as equal to the undertaking. Accordingly, Colonel Pennefather, an excellent old soldier, was put in command, and second in command was a keen young Guardsman, Sir John Willoughby, by his intimate friends called Johnny, who was thenceforth to become Jameson's close, devoted, and life-long friend.

The expedition was inspected at Macloutsi by

Lord Methuen, then Deputy Acting Adjutant-General of the Cape Command.

Lord Methuen, in his pleasant and courtly way, addressed the assembled officers in the following terms :—

‘ Lord Methuen : Gentlemen, have you got maps ?

‘ The Officers : Yes, sir.

‘ Lord Methuen : And pencils ?

‘ The Officers : Yes, sir.

‘ Lord Methuen : Well, gentlemen, your destination is Mount Hampden. You go to a place called Siboutsi. I do not know whether Siboutsi is a man or a mountain. Mr. Selous, I understand, is of the opinion that it is a man ; but we will pass that by. Then you get to Mount Hampden. Mr. Selous is of opinion that Mount Hampden is placed ten miles too far to the west. You had better correct that ; but perhaps, on second thoughts, better not. Because you might possibly be placing it ten miles too far to the east. Now good-morning, gentlemen.’

This stirring exhortation over, the expedition was thought ready to start. In the meantime Selous, assisted by a contingent of Khama’s men, had cut the road as far as Tuli, and the expedition reached that place, 50 miles or so over the border, on July 1.

Now Lobengula had asked Colenbrander and Chadwick to go to Tuli with certain indunas and give a message to Dr. Jameson. The message was that he was to go back with his impi, otherwise blood would be shed. To this Jameson replied, ‘ I am an induna sent to take the white men through. I cannot turn back.’ Pennefather and Selous gave similar answers.

The twenty Matabele seemed to wish to debate the point, and the mere sight of them had a terrify-

ing effect on the native labourers. But at this moment Radi Kladi, a brother of King Khama's, rode into camp with a mounted force of 200 of the Bamangwato, all armed with rifles, and at the sight of their enemies the Matabele departed. Colenbrander and Chadwick, however, did not return, and Matabele Wilson and Major Maxwell were now almost alone at Buluwayo. The whole Matabele nation was in an uproar, threatening the King and clamouring to attack the column. The King replied nothing but that he had sent a message to stop the white men. Matabele Wilson and Major Maxwell, who stayed on at the King's kraal, afterwards told of the commotion round the King, the threats of war, and the taunts and menaces thrown at the white men. But the old King stood firm as a rock against the angry sea of his people, and as the column went eastward the storm insensibly died away to an angry muttering.

The Pioneer force built a fort and left a small garrison at Tuli, and proceeded on its journey. The High Commissioner upon his side moved the Bechuanaland Border Police to Elebi, a point on the north-eastern border of Bechuanaland which would have threatened the flank of any attack on the Pioneers.

The column was now well on its great trek of 400 miles. Selous went first to cut the road with a squad of Khama's men and other native labourers, assisted and guarded by B. Troop of Pioneers under Captain Hoste, an ex-skipper who had left his berth on a Union mail-boat for this voyage on land. Mr. Ellerton Fry, an expert from the Cape Observatory, corrected the route by observations of the sun and stars, and Skipper Hoste would sometimes help him



—as though he were at sea—with sextant and compass.

With this forward party Dr. Jameson went as guest, as appears from a letter to his brother 'Midge' written from Tuli Camp on July 6, 1890:—

'Am off in half an hour,' he writes, 'with the forward party to Mashonaland, forty mounted men with Selous and myself—no impedimenta. Don't expect any trouble, but could always clear away from it if there was. Main body follow behind. Should things go all right I shall probably come out by the East Coast towards the end of the year—having seen the country, and had some more shooting with Selous. Bob is one of the forty—in capital spirits and health—and I hope he will do something for himself this time, as he will have very good chances. *Re* money, as I think I told you, I left instructions with Hillier to open French letters and if any indication of want of supplies to forward some at once. Sorry to hear from Sam the Academy showed bad taste again; but that does not matter—the Salon on the line is good enough. Love to all the relatives when you are writing. Hope my affairs will turn up trumps this time, and that I shall have the common sense to be satisfied.'

On July 18 the expedition reached the Umshabetsi River, and thence onwards the Pioneers cut not one road but two, running parallel with each other through the Bush. The force, split into two columns, marched abreast, so that the length of the column was halved, and in event of attack the head and tail of each column could be turned inwards at right angles, so as to form laager, in a movement almost instantaneous, like a gigantic porcupine curling up to present its unbroken front of quills to the enemy.

Scouts rode both ahead and on either flank of the

party, and every night the wagons were laagered with the cattle and horses inside and four Maxim guns mounted one at each corner. The expedition was equipped with a powerful searchlight, borrowed from Her Majesty's naval station at Simon's Town, and had also a supply of dynamite charges and electric wires. When the force formed camp charges were laid well outside it and exploded at intervals throughout the night, and it is certain that awe-inspiring reports both of the flashing light and the mysterious explosions reached the Matabele, whose unseen scouts watched the expedition throughout its course.

The country was in the first stages of the type known to the Boers as the Bushveld—an endless monotonous tract of low forest or high scrub, every tree or bush well apart from its neighbour. As the journey went on this bush country gave way to ranges of granite mountains rising by terraces to the high, bare uplands above. Selous had never before gone over the line of route, and as the mountains grew nearer he feared lest there should be no way through them to the open country beyond. To set this doubt at rest, on August 2 he and a small party rode ahead, and on the morning of the 3rd he climbed one of the great granite rocks or hills which rise in those parts in bosses and bubbles out of the plain. Thence his anxious eyes descried an opening to the northward in the long line of hills. For that opening he made and found that it was a broad, open pass, winding as if it were a carriage drive up to the high plateau beyond. Selous returned in great glee to his Pioneers.

Most of the time Jameson had been with this forward party. He knew the strength of the Mata-

bele, and he knew also the truculence of the army ; but he was as usual—cheerful, laconic, bantering. Only once did he show a sign of what must always have been in his mind. It was at night, and Jameson, Selous, Hoste, and the officers of B. Troop were sitting together inside a zariba of thorns. The column had been warned that the Matabele when they attacked at night imitated the cry of a hyena. Suddenly, out of the darkness and close at hand came a blood-curdling howl.

‘ By Jove,’ said Jameson, ‘ that ’s a good imitation ! ’

For a moment no one spoke, and then Selous said reassuringly :—

‘ Don’t worry, Doctor, no human throat could make that b——y row.’

On August 3, 1890, just about the time when Selous was looking for his pass through the mountains, Jameson wrote an account of the march to his artist brother :—

‘ Here we are, half-way to our destination, and with every prospect of getting there without any trouble from the Matabele. So far we have done 200 miles. No easy matter for a column of 500 men with 50 ox-wagons and about another hundred niggers as servants—through an entirely untravelled country mostly consisting of pretty dense bush and small forest trees. Here we are in the midst of the grandest scenery I have ever seen, a mass of granite and larger forest—the dense underwood almost entirely disappearing. This is likely to continue for another 60 miles, after which we will come out in the high Mashonaland plateau. This of course only from native information, which is always unreliable. The end of September ought to see us at the objective point (Mt. Hampden). After that I shall probably have a month’s shooting with Selous, and then, if I can, come

out by the Zambesi to the East Coast. In any case, I ought to get down to Kimberley before the end of the year, and will then write you my further proceedings—very probably to come home, but there will need to be a big settling up of my finances at that period, the result of which will depend a great deal on our success and how the financial public take it. I have pretty well gone nap in this affair, and hope to make a good thing out of it—at all events I don't think it likely I shall do any more practising in Kimberley, and have every intention of coming home at the end of the year unless there is some great advantage in connection with this affair to be gained by remaining out here. . . .'

Jameson, it is clear, had set doubts and hesitations behind him; he had ventured his all upon the enterprise; he had 'gone nap' on its success, yet—such was his habit—even to his favourite Midge he could not altogether relinquish the old mask of indifference, the old fiction of the shooting expedition.

Through the pass which Selous discovered—Provi-dential Pass as it was called—the Pioneers now marched, and by August 13 emerged upon the open plains beyond and looked with wonder over the great unknown of their inheritance. Vast tawny savan-nahs, swimming in the sun, unknown hitherto, and empty save for herds of antelope, lay stretched at their feet, and changed in the distance to the blue of a mountainous horizon. There we may imagine Jameson and his young adventurers:—

'like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien'

The column halted in the midst of a fine plain 3500 feet above the sea, and surrounded by granite

mountains a thousand feet higher, after their march of 205 miles from Tuli. There upon the plain they built the fort of Victoria.

In this open country the Matabele could no longer attack with any hope of a surprise. It seemed to be locked in a profound sleep hitherto untroubled by man. Only on a few sequestered granite rocks were there one or two wretched little villages of Makalangas whose inhabitants fled at their approach. The prospectors who had pressed up with the column scattered among the surrounding hills, and almost at once found rich deposits of alluvial gold.

But the main body pushed on, heading straight for where they supposed Mount Hampden to be. It was a hot and toilsome journey, the grass parched and brown after the dry season now drawing to an end. When the oxen flagged, the Pioneers put their shoulders to the wheel or hauled upon the trek-touw, pushing and pulling the wagons through sandy sluits and over rocky kopjes. At a point on the road 123 miles farther on, and 4750 feet above the sea, they built Fort Charter; but still pressed on. At last they descried upon the horizon a lonely little hill which they took to be Mount Hampden. The true Mount Hampden—as Lord Methuen foreboded—was not really there, but 12 miles farther on. But the mistake did not greatly matter. They were now close upon 400 miles from Tuli and 1661 miles from Cape Town. They had reached their far destination without firing a shot or losing a life. They were close upon the 18th Degree of Latitude South—well inside the tropics, but so high above the sea that the climate was temperate and pleasant. Moreover the great plain on which they stood was far from Buluwayo—beyond the reach of any sur-

prise attack. And it was near the headwaters of those tributaries of the Zambesi which were thought to run over sands of gold.

Here, then, on September 11, 1890, the Pioneers hoisted their flag, and thereafter built their fort and called it Salisbury, after the Prime Minister of England, and so brought their prosperous journey to an end.

## CHAPTER XII

### FROM SALISBURY TO THE SEA

‘I shall open up a path to the interior or perish.’

DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

WHEN Lieutenant Tyndale Biscoe broke the Company's jack on a mopani flag-pole over the Salisbury outspan one great enterprise was at an end; but another had begun. On October 1, 1890, the Pioneer Corps paraded for the last time, and at the word ‘Dismiss’ ceased to be a military force and became a civil population, whose work was to create a civilised state in the wilderness—to cut forests, make roads, lay out farms, mine for gold, and build towns. It was a difficult and, at that time, an almost impossible task. By the only existing road Mashonaland was close upon two thousand miles from the sea, and that road crossed by many tributaries of the Limpopo, which in the rainy season became torrents unfordable to wagons for months at a time. For example, one Boer transport-rider with his wagons had to wait from December until May ere he could cross the Lundi. And the Pioneers had behind them not only the Lundi, but the Umsingwani, the Umshabetsi, the Takwi, and many another uncontrolled water.

Now the East Coast could only be, as the Pioneers reckoned, between 300 and 400 miles from Mount Hampden, and the rivers there might be expected to lie not across but parallel with a line of route in

that direction. Two men at least of the Expedition had seen the need for such a road from the first. One was Jameson, who wrote to his brother before starting from Tuli that he would probably come out by the East Coast, and the other was Johnson.

‘I remember,’ says Johnson, ‘that it was whilst we were building Fort Victoria, close to the Zimbabwe ruins, in about July [he meant August], that the idea of the East Coast route first forced itself upon me. . . . I realised that we had come through at the very best time of the year when the whole country was dry and the rivers at their lowest. . . . Then I drew a mental picture of what the route would be like for four months during the rains . . . and for four months after the rains—first impassable torrents and then a water-logged country.’

Supplies and agricultural and mining machinery could not be brought up at any reasonable cost—for a great part of the year could not be brought up at all—by the road they had come. The new country must find a new way or perish.

Jameson and Johnson were of one mind; but there was another, Archibald Colquhoun, who had some title to a say in the matter. Rhodes sometimes made mistakes in men, and Colquhoun was one of his mistakes. He had been a public works official in Burmah; became a journalist and wrote articles, able and weighty, on Colonial administration and policy dear to the heart of Rhodes; but there are many instances of men who write well on affairs without talent for dealing with them. Colquhoun was one of these. Rhodes, on the strength of his interest in the articles, had engaged Colquhoun to act temporarily as administrator; but Jameson, as everybody knew, was the real repre-



sentative of Rhodes—although, both being informal men, his position had never been defined.

The arrangement might have succeeded well, for Jameson was easy to deal with. But Colquhoun, not having the gift of command, tried to make up for it by a show of authority. When he heard that Jameson and Johnson proposed to make their way to the East Coast, he dissented and at last roundly forbade them to go.

Johnson, however, went on with his preparations. He had brought with him a Berthon collapsible boat in three sections. This he packed in a wagon and sent on ahead in charge of two of his best transport drivers, Morris and Human, with orders to make the best of their way south-eastward to Massikossi, a Portuguese fort near the headwaters of the Pungwe River. He wrote, also, to an old Cape Town friend, Tom Anderson, to charter a tug and send it round to meet them on the East Coast. This letter was carried by despatch riders between 500 and 600 miles to the nearest post office.

The bullock wagon, with boat, kit, and stores, left Salisbury about September 20, 1890. On October 4, Jameson and Johnson had a parting dinner with their friends in the town, and next morning set out, taking with them young Hay, a Colonial farmer from the Queenstown district, and a Zulu boy called Jack. They had six horses, one for each man and three for packs. They carried flour, sugar, coffee, tea, a little bacon, salt, and curry-powder, but neither tinned meat nor butter, depending for meat on Johnson's Gibbs-Metford; but here they miscalculated. The country round Salisbury was without human population, no doubt owing to fear of the Matabele, and for that reason swarmed

with game ; but further eastwards it was populated and gameless.

They rode through open country by way of Marandellas, now a prosperous farming district, up into a wilderness of water-worn granite hills. From Marandellas on they struck cold drizzly rain, with the shrivelling east wind which blows there at that time of the year. Jameson had broken several of his ribs through a fall from his horse shortly before they started, and the fractures were still in plaster of Paris. He must have suffered during the ride, but he never complained. Jameson, says Johnson, 'was essentially a townsman . . . his best friend could not pretend that Providence had intended him for life on the open veld. One of the most pitifully pathetic sights in my memory is that of Jameson trying to light a fire in the rain on the banks of the Odzi River.' But his sense of humour never deserted him. It had full play over one queer incident early in the trip. The party were overtaken by a trooper—one of the Chartered Company's Police, who saluted shamefacedly, and said that he had come from Mr. Colquhoun with orders to arrest them and take them back to Salisbury.

'Damn the fellow !' said Jameson, 'I got him his job.'

After crossing the Odzi River the explorers passed through more broken country by the foothills of the Penhalonga Range. At the mouth of the Penhalonga Valley they overtook their wagon, whose spoor they had followed, outspanned near a small mining camp on the Bartisol lode. Here they unloaded the wagon, which could not compass the Penhalonga Range, and loaded everything on 'pagameeza' boys or carriers. Then Jameson and Johnson

climbed over the Range and went down to Fort Massikessi to interview Baron Rezende, the Portuguese governor of those regions.

Now the Portuguese were by no means happy about the occupation of Mashonaland. They themselves had had their gold fever, and had organised reckless expeditions into the Interior. But that was three hundred years ago, and since the heroic age of Portugal, when Francisco Barreto in complete armour rode out from the banks of the Zambesi at the head of his doomed and devoted followers in search of the Monomotapa, the great little nation had gradually declined, till now it was fain to content itself with the occupation of the coast and a few feverish forests and trading stations in the low-lying strip between coast and Central Plateau.

Yet a spark of the ancient spirit remained, and when Lisbon heard that Rhodes was busy with the occupation of a territory to which she also laid claim, a battalion of Brazilian Volunteers and some drafts of regular troops were sent to Mozambique.

Baron Rezende received the intruders with frigid politeness in his mouldering fort of Massikessi. When Jameson asked for permission to go through to the Coast he granted the request 'if we liked to take the risk,' but could offer them no help either in guides or carriers. 'We were not asked to stay the night in the Fort,' says Johnson, 'which Jameson had felt sure would be the case, but luckily I had brought along a couple of blankets, some biltong, coffee, and a billy in case of accidents, and . . . we spent a very cheery if chilly night under a bush near the head of the Revue River.'

They had overcome the only difficulty they feared—opposition from the Portuguese. To have had

to turn back and face Colquhoun—triumphant in his scepticism—would have been bitterness indeed.

The British manager on the Bartisol was, as Johnson informs us, a 'brick.' He sent off his own boys to the surrounding kraals, and they presently came back with thirty carriers, who agreed to go to the Pungwe River for so many yards of calico a head. It took four boys to carry each section of the boat, folded up and slung on a long bamboo; six more carried the four boxes; whilst the four oars, two masts and tiny sails made three more loads. With a good store of provisions from the wagon, tied in bundles, the party again set out upon their journey. Human and Morris waved farewell and turned back for Salisbury.

The party then crossed the Penhalonga Mountains, and made a wide detour to avoid Massikessi Fort, in case the Governor should have changed his mind. Here Johnson killed a magnificent eland bull, weighing, as he estimated, 1200 lbs., on which the carriers gorged themselves.

Next day they met General Machado, afterwards Governor-General of Portuguese East Africa, who was both courtly and friendly. At the sight of their horses he expressed his astonishment and admiration. For three hundred years, he said, the Portuguese had been in Manica, and never had they been able to get the horses through the country of the deadly tsetse fly along the coast. When Johnson heard that he could not get his horses beyond a certain point, he offered to sell them to the General and send them back from Chimoio. Machado was delighted, and he parted with the travellers upon the most cordial terms.

At Chimoio they left the horses with a native

chief, and plunged into a dense bamboo forest through which they marched for three or four days, until at last they came to the bank of a great river which the natives said was the Pungwe.

They arrived about noon, and for the rest of the day worked at fitting the boat together in a little shallow backwater, and packing her with carefully-selected stores. Then they paid off their carriers, and parted with poor Jack, their Zulu servant, who was certain that they could not get along without him. But since the boat, when loaded, had no more than five inches freeboard, Jack had to be left behind, and about midday the three white men pushed out upon the clear waters of the Pungwe amid farewells from him and the carriers.

The river here was about 600 yards wide ; but as they went on, it split into mazy courses through channels and backwaters—from 6 inches to a foot in depth, where the three men had constantly to jump out and drag the boat through to deeper water. ' I should be sorry to say,' says Johnson, ' how far we dragged that boat the first day—probably as far as it floated—and we were very weary and wet through to the skin when soon after sundown we arrived opposite Sarmento on the south bank of the river.'

Here Johnson, himself a hard man and used to hardship, observes: ' Not one man in a hundred could, or at least would, have stuck the pain that poor Jameson must have suffered during the ride from Salisbury, the broken ribs, not yet united, strapped up with plaster. However, the pain of riding was nothing to what he suffered when rowing with a pair of sculls. He had never rowed in his life, and we had no time to teach him, and I shall

always remember the splendid pluck with which Jameson stuck it and insisted on pulling his oar.'

The Intendente of Sarmento, 'a seemingly much-married half-caste,' received the party with kindness tempered with incredulity when they told him that they had come overland from the Cape of Good Hope. He gave them a house next his own on the eastern side of the village, and natives carried up everything from the boat, including masts, sails, and oars.

They placed everything under cover except the masts and the oars: even the sails they spread over the floor for a carpet; they took off their wet clothes and hung them up to dry, lying on their blankets in their shirts; and then Jameson began to write up his diary by the light of a candle stuck in an empty bottle.

Now the house was in fact a hut, like all the others in the town, made of dry grass tied to a framework of split bamboos. It appears that Jameson called Johnson over to see an entry he had made in his diary, and Johnson kicked over the bottle. The candle fell against the dry grass wall of the hut, which incontinently lit. Johnson made frantic efforts to put it out, but in vain. All Johnson had time to salve was his writing-case and a rifle; but his writing-case flew open as he fled and bank notes to the value of £200 fluttered back into the flames. In the meantime the fire, blown by a strong east wind, spread from hut to hut, and within a few minutes the whole town of Sarmento had ceased to exist.

'It was a weird sight,' says Johnson, 'the flames making the river and surrounding country seem as light as day, the reports of the explosion of all my

Gibbs-Metford cartridges (less those in my bandolier) mingling with the screaming of the natives, and the snorting of affrighted hippopotami in the big pool just below the landing.'

They spent a poor night squatting under the lee of the Intendente's house, which being on the east had escaped the fire. The outlook was hardly cheerful, for they had lost almost everything they had, and so, too, had the Sarmentonians, who, as the night wore on, 'showed unmistakable signs of growing peevishness.'

By lucky chance, Johnson, when he stripped, had kept on both his bandolier and a belt containing some £90 in gold. Including those, the list of their salvage, according to Johnson ran:—

- 3 singlets.
- 1 blanket partially burnt.
- 1 odd dress slipper (Jamcson's salvage).
- 1 revolver without cartridges (Jamcson's salvage).
- 1 pair boots (Hay's salvage).
- 1 7 lb. tin of Morton's icing sugar (Hay's salvage).
- 4 oars.
- 2 masts.
- 1 rifle and bandolier.
- 1 sheath-knife.
- 26 Gibbs-Metford .450 cartridges.
- 1 empty leather writing-case.
- My wife's photograph partially burnt.
- 1 sovereign belt containing about £90.

} My salvage.

It was not a consoling inventory, for except the icing sugar they were foodless, and but for their boots, the one slipper, and the three singlets naked in an unknown and savage country. Moreover, the public opinion of Sarmento evidently blamed them for the loss of the city, and an angry crowd, headed

by the Intendente, demanded compensation in unintelligible tongues, but with gestures whose meaning was plain.

Fortunately Johnson's money belt saved one part of the situation. With a gesture which gave dignity to his nakedness he handed the Intendente twenty golden sovereigns, and the manner of that official instantly changed. He cursed his people, who pressed around, for their importunity, almost wept over the white men's misfortune, which he now ascribed to Providence, invited them into his house and laboriously inscribed a document 'To all officers of the Government of His Most Catholic Majesty the King of Portugal,' inviting and commanding them to be serviceable and polite to these 'very distinguished people' who 'whilst travelling through his district had been overcome by an act of God.'

And so, after an unseemly little scuffle at the landing-stage with some natives who had not shared in the compensation, they once more embarked and pulled out on the river.

They rounded the first bend in silence, and then, says Johnson, 'rested on our oars and "appreciated the situation," ending, I remember, with roars of laughter as we saw the funny side of things.'

The humour of it was that they had started from Salisbury 'rather with the idea of impressing any Portuguese we might meet' with their wagon and fine oxen, their good horses, Berthon boat, etc., etc., and now here they were, unshaven, disreputable, nearly penniless, nearly naked ragamuffins.

As they went on the river grew wider and the islands larger, till it was difficult to tell which was mainland and which was island. But Jack the Zulu before he left had winnowed out for them



information that the river had two main channels, the southern being the more direct and frequented. The African sun now high in the heavens, grilled the heads and unprotected bodies of the travellers almost beyond endurance. Presently they saw twenty Egyptian geese sitting on a sand-bank, and by careful stalking Johnson managed to shoot one. Then they paddled on in search of a place of rest and refreshment.

Once again the channel deepened and narrowed till they shipped their oars and drifted between the winding banks. Then Hay, steering in the bows, gave a shout, and Johnson, who had been pouring water on their heads, saw that they were nearly atop of a herd of buffalo dozing with their noses just out of water. Grasping his rifle he jumped out of the boat and plunged into the river. He clambered up the bank as the buffalo were floundering out on the opposite side, aimed at the nearest, a big cow, and the bullet struck her square in the root of the neck. She had but strength to drag herself clear of the river and fall dead on the bank as the rest of the herd lumbered off.

'As quickly as possible,' says Johnson, 'I cut off about 100 lbs. weight of prime cut, including the tongue and some liver for an immediate meal.' Then they pushed on to the shade of the first big tree and halted.

Now the problem was to make a fire without matches or a glass lens. But Johnson used a dodge from the old hunting days. Taking a cartridge he removed the bullet and wads, threw away all the powder except enough to cover a sixpenny piece, which he carefully poured back into the cartridge case. Then he cut the driest piece of his singlet and

stuffed it into the case above the powder, made a little heap of dry grass and sticks on the ground, and fired his rifle into it. This is a delicate operation, for either too much or too little powder means failure; but at the third attempt he succeeded. The piece of cloth was shot out of the rifle a glowing tinder. Johnson carefully heaped upon it more dried grass and minute chips of dry wood, blowing gently the while, till he raised a cheerful fire and the buffalo liver and tongue were roasting in ashes.

The food appeared delicious, and after a heavy sleep they felt mightily refreshed. Then in the afternoon they embarked again, between well-defined and heavily-wooded banks.

The moon rose; they made good progress down stream. 'The silence of the evening was broken only by the feathering of our oars, and by the splashes of crocodiles as they rushed off mud banks in the inner bends of the river on our approach, or by the resentful snort of the hippopotami.' It was a pleasant interval of coolness and of calm.

The night wore on, and at about eleven o'clock as they guessed—being too tired to row—they decided to land. But it was a difficult business to get ashore, for the banks were densely covered with huge tropical creepers. At last, however, they reached an old, well-worn hippopotamus trail up the bank on the northern side, and found the country on top comparatively open, save for a few very large tropical trees. So they made the boat fast to a big creeper, and scrambled up the bank with their scanty belongings.

At the first halt they had cut some of the buffalo beef into very thin strips, first partially drying them

in the smoke of the fire, then hanging them in the wind and sun. They had also woven a basket of palm leaves, which they lined thickly with mud, and in this they put the remains of their fire, and they fed it with dry sticks.

Thanks to Johnson's wise precautions, they had thus both fire and food, but neither bed nor blankets, nor any protection from the mosquitoes 'of a bulldog breed' which now attacked them.

Presently they heard the roar or rather grunt of lions not far off. For a while they comforted themselves with the belief that they were safely on the island called 'Mdingee-Dingee' between the two branches of the river. But they had lost their bearings among the many islands just below Sarmento, and were really going down the long north branch of the Pungwe. They were therefore upon the mainland between that river and the Zambesi, one of the most lion-infested countries in Southern Africa.

The calling of one lion to another grew nearer and nearer. Then they saw three lions moving near some bushes within fifty yards, and 'obviously taking a more than passing interest in us.' As the East Coast lions had the reputation of being bolder than those of the interior, Major Johnson thought it wise to spend three of his remaining twenty-one cartridges—very carefully aiming high so as only to scare.

The beasts disappeared; but the roaring continued, and the noise of the rifle shots raised a pandemonium in the river, where innumerable hippopotami bellowed and splashed, while jackals and night birds in the surrounding gloom added their infernal noises.

'As poor Jameson used to say, we could always repeat that night—if we were lunatics enough to wish to do so—less the mosquitoes—by sitting out in singlets under a tree, by a smoking fire, in the moonlight on the patch of ground at the end of the old bear terraces in the Zoo and arranging for all the animals to be let out under the impression that a meal was waiting for them in our vicinity.'

Their next visitor was a hippopotamus bull, enormous in the moonlight as he walked slowly round in narrowing circles, evidently consumed with curiosity. He was within twenty yards when Major Johnson deemed it wise to stop him with a bullet, lest he should tread upon them. With a bellow the beast rushed down the trail at the bottom of which lay their Berthon boat.

The watchers' hearts leaped into their mouths as they heard the plunge; but fortunately the *Pioneer* had swung out to the end of her moorings and escaped unscathed.

At this point they judged it better to resume life afloat, and, gathering together their fire-basket and other goods, got aboard. But the boat was ill-adapted for sleeping purposes owing to the seats, which acted as stretchers and kept the sides from collapsing. Still two men managed to curl up somehow and sleep while the third stood watch. The river seemed alive with hippopotamus, and the air resounded with their splashing as they left the river to feed or returned to the water. One big-tusked bull came within ten feet of the boat before he satisfied his curiosity, but the *Pioneer* rode safely through the uncomfortable night.

On the first streak of dawn they untied the painter and resumed their down-stream journey. The river now flowed in a clearly-defined channel 200 yards

wide through the great 'flat' or plain, 90 miles across, which divides the Pungwe River from the Zambesi. Here the travellers saw vast herds of big game—chiefly buffalo, water-buck, blue wildebeest, Burchell's antelope, zebra, and Lichtenstein's hartebeest. But as they had plenty of meat and few cartridges they left the game alone and pressed forward until the sun compelled them to seek shade.

Johnson stood the sun pretty well, as he had long before accustomed himself to hunting in his shirt; but Jameson's condition was rapidly becoming alarming, for his skin was more tender and the sunburns turned into great blisters. Now, however, there was no tree in sight for miles, and the travellers were fain to seek refuge under a noisome grass shelter which had evidently been used by native fishermen or hunters some time before.

At three in the afternoon they resumed their voyage, rowing hard with a strong current. Then they rested for a few minutes on their oars and drifted lazily on, admiring the scene. Swallows skimmed the peaceful water, whose surface was broken only now and then by a jumping fish or a swirl as one of the innumerable crocodiles, floating eyes-out in the lazy afternoon, sank before the nearing boat.

Suddenly from the distance ahead came a dull, low roar—like distant thunder; and round the bend a bare two hundred yards away surged a great, white wave or curling breaker. It was a tidal bore—such as sweep up the long estuaries of many of these rivers. The voyagers would have made for the bank; but it was too late, so turning the *Pioneer* head on, they took the full force of a breaker three

feet high. They were nearly dashed out of the boat ; the fire-basket went overboard ; and the boat was awash, but fortunately she had double sides, and the air space between them just kept her afloat.

They improvised a bailer out of the icing-sugar tin, and, holding on to an overhanging bough, managed to get a good deal of the water out of her. Then they rowed slowly until they came to a little native village of grass huts, which—according to the custom of the country—were perched upon poles ten feet high to keep them above the floods of the rainy season.

Here the travellers were hospitably received, and traded some of the meat and empty cartridge-cases for handfuls of millet, which they boiled in an earthen pot given them by the natives. Thus refreshed, they waited for the tide, and with a bright moon and a six-knots ebb to help them set out again. Rowing hard, they passed the junction of the northern and southern channels, just above the little Portuguese settlement of Nunes Ferreira, hardly to be distinguished from the native villages. They now kept close to the north bank, along which for hours they had deep water. But with the ebbing tide suddenly their sculls touched bottom and the boat grounded. Johnson got out and walked towards the middle of the river—here about a mile wide—and about five hundred yards from the boat found a channel some three feet deep.

He went back to consult with his friends. They deemed it unwise to risk straining the boat by hauling her over the sand, and so divided her into her three sections and then carried these one at a time, with the kit, to the bank of the new channel.

It was now early dawn. The bow and mid-ship

sections had been fastened together by Johnson while the other two were bringing over the kit. Hay and Jameson were in the act of placing the stern section in position, so that Johnson might fix the sockets and make the lashings secure. At this critical moment, to their horror, they heard again the sound of the on-coming bore. They held the boat head on until the wave struck her, and then scrambled aboard—an unpleasant position, out of sight of land in a swamped boat, one-third of which was wagging loose in the tide. Nevertheless, half drifting, half paddling, they at length made the northern bank; tied the painter to an overhanging branch, and all three, dog-tired, curled up somehow in their sections and fell asleep.

Johnson dreamed that he was drowning, and waking up found his head just above water. He had only paid out about five feet slack on the painter so that when the tide had risen ten out of its twenty-seven feet the nose of the boat had been pulled under water and she had filled again.

They cut the rope and drifted back upon the tide into the slimiest of creeks, where they laid up until the tide turned, about two hours before sundown.

It was a terrible day in the heat and the slime. Johnson and Hay to make fast the boat got out and worked up to the waist in mud—loathsome and full of poisonous-looking crabs and ludicrous little sea-horses, and all sorts of other weird crawling things. With the afternoon came a horde of the biggest mosquitoes they had yet seen, which vigorously attacked their undefended limbs. They seemed to be in the midst of pestilential and interminable mangrove forest with roots that coiled in the slime

like snakes. There was no sign of game ; their new fire-basket had been put out when the boat was swamped, and what remained of the meat was too high to be eaten raw. All they had was a handful or two of uncooked corn.

In the waning daylight, when the flood-tide had slackened off, they left their creek and paddled eastward. The river had now so far widened that it seemed like the sea. Large mangrove islands appeared, and among these the southern bank lost itself four or five miles away. ' We had started off,' says Johnson, ' weeks ago to find the sea, and I remember wondering, somewhat uncomfortably, what we were going to do with it now we had found it. The view looked very vast, lonely, and inhospitable, and the *Pioneer* in the midst of it all—chartless, compassless, waterless, and foodless—seemed to shrink into a mere cockle-shell.'

Then the breeze freshened up from seaward—sadly reducing their speed. They were weak and rowed languidly.

And now an amazing thing happened. Johnson saw on a narrow bit of horizon between two distant islands two tiny sticks, so small and so far away that they looked for all the world like two lucifer matches. The others thought Johnson was mad—' ship-mad ' they called it—but a black spot appeared below the sticks. There could be no mistake about it. It was a steamer—a steamer at anchor.

The night was falling, and they had determined to keep to the north bank. But they now observed with some anxiety that whereas the steamer showed a little to the south of east, the line of mangrove trees made a wide sweep to the northward. They could not see that the steamer was lying about three-



quarters of a mile off the low-lying island of Beira ; but took her to be well at sea about ten miles away.

In the gathering darkness they anxiously debated whether they should hug the northern shore or make for the vessel now lost to sight in the gloom. The night was cloudy and threatening. They were in two minds when suddenly out of the darkness shone a light—the riding light which the steamer had hoisted. Their doubts were resolved for them ; they steered for the light.

In a few minutes they had lost sight of the shore and were rowing in the teeth of a freshening wind, which made a nasty jobble against a strong ebb-tide. For a while they paid no heed to the drenches of spray ; but soon heavy splashes of water broke over the bows and the port side. The wind was veering to the north-east ; it was clear that they were in imminent danger of being swamped. Accordingly they made a new arrangement of their crew of three. Jameson went aft and steered ; Hay went for'ard and baled ; Johnson stayed amidships and rowed.

Then the steamer's light went out !

The first thought of these wretched mariners was to turn and make for the northern shore ; but the increasing sea made it impossible to live unless the boat was held bow on to it.

So bow on for an hour they laboured to keep her living. They had given up all idea of finding the steamer in the waste of darkness, and thought only how far they might be carried out before the tide would turn and bring them in again.

In this desperate situation Major Johnson rested a moment on his oars and peered through the spray

ahead. A dark mass towered above the boat. It was the steamer.

They shouted desperately, 'Ship ahoy! Heave a line quickly!'—and continued to shout. For a while there was no sound or sign of life from the steamer. Johnson says that his heart sank to zero as they passed along her hull. Then some one shouted from above, 'Below there!' and a line fell right across the bows of the little *Pioneer*.

'Five minutes later,' says Johnson, 'we were landed on board the *Lady Wood*, and drinking big tots of neat brandy. The strain of the last twenty-four hours—particularly the last one—was over, and all three were done in.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Now when we consider that this story is truth and not fiction, we must count it an amazing circumstance that the party should so have been saved or have been saved at all.

When Major Johnson wrote to his friend Tom Anderson (of the firm of Anderson and Murison of Cape Town) he asked him to instruct the captain to cruise up and down between the most southern mouth of the Zambesi and Chiloane Island, both small Portuguese stations, and to look out for a flag by day and a bonfire by night. This the captain had done as best he could for twenty-nine days, although the sea was so shallow he could not approach nearer than between ten and fifteen miles of the coast, and every night the bush-fires blazed at various points along the shore. Still the captain had put in to the mouths of the Busi and Pungwe Rivers at least once a week for nearly a month, and had come that morning for the last time. Indeed, he had intended to put to sea before dark—for he had given up all

hope—but, going ashore for fresh meat, had shot a zebra late in the afternoon—just where the Beira railway station now stands—and had resolved to wait until next day so as to take aboard enough of the meat to last him for his voyage of four or five days to Natal.

As for the ship's light going out, it appears that it had been hoisted by the lamp boy; and the careful skipper when he came on deck had cursed the boy for wasting good oil so far out of the track of steamers and had ordered him to extinguish it at once.<sup>1</sup>

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When Dr. Jameson got to Cape Town he wrote to his brother Sam a letter so characteristically laconic, when we know what he had gone through, that he seems to live in it as much as in Colonel Johnson's narrative:—

'QUEEN'S HOTEL, SEA POINT,

'November 11, '90.

'DEAR SAM,—Have received both your letters, for which many thanks. I am in splendid condition and have had a capital trip. Have had a good many people to see or would have written at once; shall leave by Thursday's mail for Kimberley, and probably wait there till Rhodes arrives. Till I get there my future movements are quite uncertain. Will write you fully then, and very probably be able to make out a trip to Johannesburg. *Re* billets, *entre nous* I have had rather a tiff with Colquhoun, who is an ass; but it makes me still more uncertain of my movements till I

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<sup>1</sup> In the late war Major Johnson became Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson and was given command of the 26th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment. He served partly in India, where he assisted General Dyer to put down the formidable rising of April 1918. To amuse his regiment he wrote an admirable account of his African adventures, which appeared in the *Royal Sussex Herald*, vol. iii. (Lahore, 1918). This chapter is little more than a transcription, somewhat summarised, of Colonel Johnson's graphic narrative, which he very kindly placed at disposal of the author.

have seen Rhodes. I have rather an inclination to take a trip home unless there is something to be done outside returning to practice. I am afraid I have got rather too restless for the last. Expected to see Blanche<sup>1</sup> at East London, but heard there from young Fuller she had left a fortnight before. Cape banks seem to have made a mess of everybody, and general financial conditions are rotten at home as out here. As to my shares, I don't know myself what I possess till I get to the office. In any case I believe in the country and its future, and unless very hard up would not feel inclined to sell at present, to say nothing of the look of the thing, having just returned and to a certain extent connected with it. However, this is all in the air till I know something more.—Yours,

L. S. JAMESON.'

On November 16 Jameson arrived in Kimberley, and from there wrote more fully to his brother Midge:—

'THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY,  
'KIMBERLEY, *November 17, 1890.*

'This is short as have a lot of writing to do and hate it.—L. S. J.

'DEAR MIDGE,—Arrived here yesterday after a pretty adventurous journey over a partly unknown country—splendid health all the way, notwithstanding my previously broken ribs. Roughly we did 430 miles—on horseback 230—walked 50 and rowed 150. First portion natives had never seen a horse or a white man—generally an escort of one to two hundred natives from kraal to kraal, all very friendly. Plenty of game of every description—the walking was the hardest part to me as I hate it at any time. There were only three of us, and one had never had an oar in his hand, so the other two had to keep to a pair of sculls each the whole way—150 miles in five days and one night was pretty hard work, but I was in such splendid condition that I really scarcely felt it: the boat was one of these Berthon

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<sup>1</sup> Sam's wife.

collapsibles in three sections about 14 feet long with sails; but we were never able to use them—having a strong head-wind all the way. The boat we had carried across to the Pungwe by native carriers. On the river any amount of game—crocodiles simply in hundreds every day—buffalo—hippopotami—lions occasionally, etc., etc. At the coast we had a small steamer waiting for us, and then a beastly rough passage down the coast.

‘Rhodes is away, but will be back this week. My movements are quite uncertain till I have seen him. He offers me a very swagger “billet” in south Zambesia, really entire control. I am not sure about taking it till I have talked it over with him. In any case I shall either go up there or come home for a bit—probably the former. Will send some cash first if I do. It is interesting work and has a future in it which is attractive: I think I am probably done with practising and am sorry in a way, but have got into too restless a life to settle down to it. *Re* appointment above, keep it to yourself for the present. I am not even telling Sam as he has a tendency to talk and that does not do in these affairs till they are settled.—Yrs., L. S. JAMESON.’

## CHAPTER XIII

### JAMESON MAKES ANOTHER JOURNEY

' . . . and there they found many strange adventures and perillous.'

WHEN Jameson and Rhodes met in Kimberley in the latter part of November 1890, the two fell at once to the business in hand. As to the territory, we may be certain that their main preoccupation was the road to the East coast and the Portuguese who stood between. Without a road to the East they were beaten. They must get through somehow: they must have—as we now say—a corridor. And to get one must have been the burden of their counsel. But on the personal side there was Jameson's position to be considered. And here the result is best given in Jameson's own words:—

'THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY,  
'KIMBERLEY, *December 1, 1890.*

'DEAR MIDGE,—Have had a week with Rhodes, and the result is that I have accepted his proposition and leave for Mashonaland and Manica to-morrow morning. While Rhodes is Premier, and therefore cannot go to Mashonaland, I represent him there as Managing Director with the approval of the Home Board and with absolute control over everybody. It is a large order, but I am fairly well initiated in the ins and outs, and think I shall be able to make a success of it. Helping to make maps has more attraction in it than even a good practice, and certainly has more possibilities in the future. Next year I shall be certainly on the move, as this includes not only Mashonaland

but the surroundings of the Charter's possessions, which I shall do my best to increase, in fact all the so-called Zambesia or, as it will be called, "Rhodesia."

'My address will be : Dr. L. S. Jameson, Fort Salisbury, Mashonaland.'

Three days after writing this letter Jameson left Kimberley and made posthaste for Mashonaland. There was reason. At Tuli he met the first hint of trouble in the shape of a wagon containing two Portuguese officers going down to Kimberley as prisoners of the Company. Mr. Mundell of the Company's police, who was in charge, introduced the prisoners, Colonel d'Andrada and Mor Gouveia. The two Portuguese gentlemen remained under the tilt in gloomy dignity, in offended pride, looking out upon the howling wilderness around them without appearing to perceive the intrusion. It was a situation which might have strained even the Doctor's nonchalance. Jameson jumped into the wagon and addressed them with all the charm and courtesy of which he was master ; but they refused to be softened, and although he gave Mundell a formal order of release, insisted upon being taken on to Kimberley.

After a journey of twenty-two days he arrived in Salisbury on Christmas Day of 1890. Here he 'settled everything with Colquhoun amiably,' and the settlement is described by Jameson himself in a letter he wrote to his brother Sam :—

'You ask about my position. Well, it is to stay here as Managing Director in Rhodes's place till he can come up. He has transferred to me his full power from the Board with the Board's cabled sanction. And my arrangement with Rhodes himself is, that if I like at the end of Colquhoun's

year, I can take over the Administratorship. This he offered me at once if I liked ; but I did not want it, and thought a change at present would not look well for the Company. Even afterwards I should rather Colquhoun stayed on if he turns out all right, as I should hate the administrative detail work, but like the general control work. Now Colquhoun's promise is limited to the administration of Mashonaland under my control — and all the outside political work, Manica, Portuguese, etc., etc., is mine alone. . . . Rhodes behaved well to me, offering me really anything I wanted ; but this was certainly where I could be most useful, and having given a couple of years to it more or less I should like to see the country fairly started and have a hand in it. Also it will probably give me some kind of a career, or at all events occupation for the future. I may be years here ; but will frequently have to come down-country . . . *Re finances*, of course if this is a success I shall come out well ; but in the meantime Hillier, who holds my P.A., will always have a little ready cash in case you want it.'

The rest of the letter chiefly concerns family affairs, and particularly Bob, who has pegged out his claims at Hartley Hill and is enthusiastic about the whole Umfuli District: 'It is bound to be a big diggings—the most extensive in the world, I think.' But there is an interesting note on communications, which sheds a retrospective light on his trip down the Pungwe:—

'The infernal long transport kills us. All the more necessity for our East route. To a business man you will understand its importance when I tell you we are at present paying £72 per ton from Cape Town to here and by the East route Johnstone [Johnson] would take the contract to land goods at Fort Salisbury from Cape Town for under £11 per ton, less than the Kimberley railway rate alone.'

They expected to have the East route open in April. 'The steamers for the river are ordered, and



I am now arranging about the land portion here. Portuguese are [giving] and will give us some trouble; but they brag more than they do. I think a peaceable occupation could have been obtained; but force having been used we cannot go back, and must make reason for it.'

There was indeed, at this time, an increasing trouble with the Portuguese, and force had been used for which, as Jameson puts it, 'we must now make reason.' We need not trouble to go so far back as Major Serpa Pinto's offensive on the Shire River in the early spring of 1890, which brought about the visit of British gunboats to Portuguese waters. That was but an early symptom of these later troubles. The Portuguese had remained supine upon the feverish coast-lands of Africa for about three hundred years, yet had certain trading and frontier stations as far up the Zambesi as Tete and at other points like Massikessi a considerable way from the coast. With these frontiers they had been content, and had never in the memory of man sought to cross the watershed and establish themselves on the high and healthy interior. When the Moffat Treaty and other signs of a British advance along the central plateau became known, the Portuguese made claims which were denied by our Foreign Office. Then the column arrived, and Selous pointed out to Jameson and Colquhoun the importance of Umtasa's country, which contained the eastern gateway of the new territory—the road through Umtali and the Penhalonga Range which Jameson, Johnson, and Hay were probably the first white men to explore. Umtasa's kraal was on the western side of the Penhalonga Range, while the Portuguese frontier fort of Massikessi was, as we have seen, upon the

eastern. Colquhoun and Selous together visited the Chief and secured the Treaty of September 14, and then Selous, whose interventions in the higher diplomacy were not altogether happy, rode over the mountains and gave formal notice of the concession to the Portuguese Commandant Baron Rezende—the same nobleman whom we have seen treating Dr. Jameson and Major Johnson with a certain reserve. Nor was Rezende cordial to Selous—as is perhaps not altogether surprising. Fearing attack by the Portuguese, Umtasa asked the Company for protection, and Colquhoun, who had left a garrison of one policeman, reinforced him with two small detachments of police under Captain P. W. Forbes and Lieutenant the Hon. Eustace Fiennes. On November 15 Baron Rezende and Colonel d'Andrada with a considerable force took possession of the kraal. But Forbes and Fiennes, who had only about thirty men, arrested the Portuguese officers and disarmed their force. The Baron was conveyed under escort across the frontier to Massikessi; but Colonel d'Andrada and Mor Gouveia, being judged to be soldiers of vigour and enterprise whom it would be dangerous to leave at large, were sent as prisoners first to Fort Charter, then to Salisbury, and finally, as we have seen, to Kimberley.

In those hostilities Jameson was chiefly anxious concerning the fate of Gazaland, or that part of it which lay north of the Limpopo and stood between the southern part of Mashonaland and the sea. The Gazas, like the Matabele, were a warlike tribe, who had swarmed off from the Zulu hive. The kraal of the great Gaza Chief Gungunhana lay somewhat to the north of the mouth of the Limpopo, and was almost on the coast. It was Jameson's idea, or

possibly it originated with Rhodes, to secure a concession from Gungunhana that would open a way to the sea-coast in that direction. And as it was notorious that the Portuguese feared the Gazas more than the Gazas feared them, Jameson and Rhodes no doubt calculated that the Portuguese might not be able to establish their title to that part of the East coast.

The rains being at hand, Jameson decided to act at once. And as the mission was both delicate and dangerous, he also determined to undertake it himself.

On December 28, three days that is to say after arriving at Salisbury, he set out for Manica, as the centre of trouble, and after getting things a little into shape there, came to his decision, as we see in the following letter, written to Sam from the Umtali Valley, Manica, on January 12, 1891 :—

‘I told you in my last, this was likely to be the centre of interest in the Company’s territories at present. Well, I find it more so than I expected. We must go ahead, and I hope all things will be settled within the next three months. I had intended returning to Fort Salisbury before this ; but instead am going to make an attempt to see Gungunhana, which if successful will finish up our native question satisfactorily. If I get through all right I shall probably come out by Delagoa Bay again, and then may make a trip up your way before returning. This is all quite unforeseen, but I am sure is the right thing to do. We have a man there who has gone in from the south, Dr. Sholtz. I believe you knew him in Johannesburg, and if I can get down from here through all the intermediate native chiefs and finish things with Gungunhana I don’t think the Portuguese will have many legs to stand on. Even then I can be back in Mashonaland in about three months, that is at the end of the rains, which will be soon enough for any work in my line. The

weather will be the nasty part of the journey. Otherwise about seven days beyond here it is a splendid country to pass through according to native accounts. So far it has been a continuous deluging rain and pretty difficult travelling with a cart. I have two good men with me, Doyle and Moodie, and about 20 carriers—will take our horses as far as possible—perhaps all the way. The natives make it 800 miles to Gungunhana's kraal according to their method of calculation by days, though I can hardly think it is so much from the map, but the latter is probably guess-work as usual.

'This is simply a marvellous country, both for minerals and agriculture ; but the transport for troops, etc., is dreadful at this rainy season—consequent very limited supply of grub or clothing. However, that ought to be all right in another three months when we must have our East coast route open—steamers for Pungwe or Busi Rivers already ordered, and I have just made final arrangements for completion of road to both. Then we ought to get a decent population in. Of course the Portuguese is our possible difficulty, but they must give way—at all events as regards route, and I think practically certain as regards territory.

'You will hear from me from Delagoa Bay or, if I return to Mashonaland by the same route, from Fort Salisbury. Write as before to the latter. Am writing this in Heyman's hut, who is officer commanding in Manica. . . . Yrs.,

'L. S. JAMESON.

'I start to-morrow morning.'

Of Doyle we already know something. He had been used by Rhodes and Jameson, not altogether successfully, in Lobengula's kraal. D. G. B. Moodie was that resourceful and friendly gold-miner on the Bartisol lode who had helped Jameson and Johnson to find carriers for their journey over the Penhalonga Range to the Pungwe River. Doyle made trouble at first by insisting upon what Jameson took to be 'most outrageous terms' (one of which

was £10,000 for his widow if he died on the expedition). Moreover, Jameson distrusted Doyle: it was for that reason—according to Sam—that Jameson went—‘distrusting Doyle to act single-minded for the Company he determined to go with him.’ Nevertheless, as he had no other interpreter, he agreed to the terms upon his own responsibility, and the party set out, with two horses, a mule, and twenty native carriers, carrying some rifles (a present to Gungunhana) and a few provisions.

They set out for the high plateau close to Umtasa’s kraal at the head of Umtali Valley, and travelled in a southerly direction, taking, however, a course somewhat west of a straight line to avoid the rivers, which were by this time—the latter end of January—swollen and almost impassable. By taking this course they crossed nearly all the rivers, except the Sabi, at their headwaters and had, says Doyle, ‘no rivers to swim or dangerous fords.’ They did, however, lose the mule in a flooded stream, and with it they lost the greater part of their scanty provisions.

They had expected to find food at the native kraals or shoot game. On the first day they reached Umzimonya’s kraal amidst beautiful country and grass-clad hills. The kraal itself was built on the top of a high granite rock almost inaccessible from below. But as they went on through vast, undulating, wooded plains they found hardly a habitation. The miserable remnant of Umhama’s people, whose ancestors had occupied the greater part of what is now northern Gazaland, had been driven by their conquerors into the fastnesses of the granite hills, and a country fit to support a great people showed no signs of habitation.

The travellers made 20 miles a day in a cool and bracing country between 4000 and 5000 feet above sea-level, and soon reached the headwaters of the Lusiti, where the granite gave way to slate and Moodie's experienced eye found traces of gold and old gold-workings of the same kind as the pioneers had already found in Mashonaland and Manicaland.

Then through Shakwanda's country of dense bush they suddenly descended to a much lower level—the site of Manhlagas—the old town of Gungunhana—which they reached on their fourteenth day. The country under the mountains was rich and beautiful—hundreds of miles of land well fitted for agriculture. But the great kraal was deserted, as were hundreds of others in the neighbourhood. The Chief with all his peoples—a great multitude<sup>1</sup>—had recently travelled southwards to punish Spelenyama, a chief who had raised the flag of rebellion against him. And not only was the country deserted, but the migrating people had swept before them both cattle and game. The only animal which the travellers met in their long tramp was a skunk, which they shot and the Kafirs ate. Their food was green 'mealies,' as maize is called in South Africa, taken from the gardens of the deserted kraals which they passed. One evening they could not even find mealies, and were fain to satisfy their hunger with wild oranges.

After passing Spelenyama's kraal, they marched through undulating wooded country between hills overlooking the Busi on the left and a corresponding range on the right, and then crossed the valley of

<sup>1</sup> Sam's letter estimates them at 100,000 men, but this is an exaggeration. The Gazas, like the Matabeles and the parent Zulus, were a military organisation, and Gungunhana's army is estimated by Doyle at 20,000 warriors.

the Sabi. The river at that point was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide, and half a mile of it strong, running water. Beyond the Sabi the country was dead level, at no place more than 300 feet above the sea, where at this season the rains formed a chain of swamps, so deep in many places that the horses were almost foundered in the mire. It was a nightmare journey, drenched night and day, plodding forward, drawing their feet continually out of never-ending mud—for one spell of eleven days it rained without break, and for a whole fortnight they were encompassed by dense, dripping forest. In this dismal land first Doyle and then Moodie fell sick of fever. Jameson became doctor, nurse, and bearer, although he, too, was suffering from malaria. 'Doyle,' says Sam, 'was very bad, and many a time Lanner thought the £10,000 would have to be paid, probably by himself if the Company repudiated the bargain.' We can imagine Jameson, sardonically congratulating his patient upon the contract and assuring him that it would be to his doctor a melancholy obligation, a debt of honour.

In the Sabi country those natives whom they saw spoke of Gungunhana as 'the King' with bated breath, although between them and the monarch were still vast plains, usually impassable for lack of water. Even now, with the country flooded by unusual rains, drinking water could only be found through the kind offices of natives acquainted with the country.

From the swamps they rose a little into a country of rich crops and fine timber, and at last after travelling for forty-six or forty-seven days, and covering a distance estimated by Doyle at between 700 and 800 miles, they reached Gungunhana's kraal, 'pretty ragged and famished.'

This new town of the Great Chief of the Gaza people was upon a fairly healthy site 300 feet above the sea, and was like Buluwayo—‘the usual type of Zulu huts grouped together, with an inner enclosure in which the royal wives are kept.’

Gungunhana himself, says Doyle, ‘has always been most courteous to us. I am informed that his fighting force is 20,000 warriors of pure Zulu breed, 2000 of whom are armed with Martini-Henry rifles, and the remainder with shield and short assegai.’

At the King’s kraal these three Englishmen, weak, fever-stricken, ragged, and dirty with the mud of their journey, were confronted by a scoundrel of a native whose kraal they had passed through a day or two before, and who had then tried to blackmail them with extortionate charges for food. The fellow accused them before Gungunhana with the crime of rape. But Jameson, pointing to himself and his companions, travel-stained, yellow, haggard, staggering with fatigue, and shivering with ague: ‘Do we look,’ he said, ‘like men who desire women?’ When the remark was translated, Gungunhana smiled and dismissed the accuser with contumely.

Then they ‘had a big palaver in front of the Portuguese officials—grand uniforms, spurs, epaulettes, etc., etc.; but the ragged fever-stricken envoys out of the wilderness eventually induced Gungunhana to put himself under the protection of the British, and [he] signed a concession of all his country, which extends from the Limpopo to the Zambesi and includes Manica.’

Here was the most notable of all the achievements of Jameson. Before Lobengula he had the prestige of ‘the Mouth of the Man who made the Great Hole.’ He could deliver wagon-loads of rifles



and 'globular sums' of golden sovereigns. He could promise wonderful white bulls that presently arrived in carts from over the sea. But to Gungunhana's kraal he came with hands almost empty, in rags, stripped of all that gives prestige, or testifies to power, save his voice and his eyes. He met arrayed against him everything that might be expected to impress a savage: and in the teeth of all he won—a victory, an amazing victory, as Thomas Carlyle would have said, of mere stark manhood over clothes.

Armed with the concession, the Doctor and his party went on to the River Limpopo. At that season the banks of the great estuary could only be approached through miles of slush and mud—a swampy, tropical country like lower Bengal. The natives were harvesting large quantities of grain, and the weary travellers refreshed themselves with bananas, pine-apples, and other tropical fruits which grew in wild luxuriance.

Jameson had taken a leaf from Johnson's book and arranged for a tug to be waiting for him in the estuary; but when he got to the Limpopo there indeed was the tug—*The Countess of Carnarvon*, but beside her lay a Portuguese gunboat, with orders to the travellers to come aboard.

Now Jameson realised that his concession was in danger, and acted, as usual, promptly. He gave the document and the two horses to one of his men, and told him to make his way overland to Delagoa Bay and wait for him there.

The Doctor and his party were then brought on board. They were searched and treated as prisoners, to the infinite satisfaction of Jameson, and were finally released at Delagoa Bay, where Jameson met

his man and recovered the document, having accomplished, as Sam said to Tom, 'one of the pluckiest journeys ever attempted in South Central Africa.' 'Selous admits,' Sam continues, 'it is one of the worst pieces of country to go through, and Lanner went at the worst time of the year. It is marvellous he got through and is now almost rid of fever, and looking well and strong and hard. He says he is developing muscle in all directions, greatly to his astonishment.' <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of this journey to Gungunhana's kraal the author has seen two accounts. The first is in a long letter written from Johannesburg on April 23, 1891, by his brother Sam to his brother Tom. It begins: 'I went down to Kimberley last week and wrote you a hurried line from there. Now about Lanner.' This account, then, may be taken as from Jameson's own lips a very short time after his return. The other account is by Denis Doyle in the proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, evening meeting, June 29, 1891. Doyle's account is entirely occupied with the configuration and appearance of the country. It is stated, by the way, that the expedition started on March 16; but this is probably a misprint for January 13 on which day Jameson said he was going to start.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SIR JOHN WILLOUGHBY

'Unfortunately some of our younger spirits went up and forced the route from Beira, and then we had the unfortunate dispute with the Portuguese, which, however, did bring about a happy result.'

CROIL RHODES.

RHODES went to England at the beginning of 1891 'upon urgent business' according to Michell, and we may surmise that this urgent business had something to do with Mashonaland. There were at least two urgent questions, one the squabble with the Portuguese over the frontier and the corridor or right of way to the coast, and the other the threatened Boer trek from the Transvaal over the Limpopo into Mashonaland. We may take it as probable that he discussed these matters with Lord Salisbury.

But he was back in South Africa before the end of March 1891. The Portuguese, through the friendly intervention of the Foreign Office, had been persuaded to come to a temporary settlement, or *modus vivendi*, under which a way was allowed through Beira to Mashonaland. Yet when a private venture fitted out at Durban arrived at the mouth of the Pungwe in the middle of February 1891 they were stopped by the local authorities, and held for a fortnight on an unhealthy island. As they had not provided themselves with the necessary papers, the Portuguese were able to defend their action in form; but their attitude showed their unfriendliness.

Sir Henry Loch wrote to Lord Knutsford (on

March 25, 1891) that no vessels were allowed up the Pungwe; that this was a direct breach of the *modus vivendi* and would be likely to cause serious difficulties, for all arrangements had been made for the ascent of that river, and wagons, etc., provided to convey passengers and goods to Mashonaland by that route.

Rhodes thought he had a *casus belli*, and with his keen eye for a point did not miss it. The Portuguese, as we have seen, had already on the Limpopo constrained *The Countess of Carnarvon*, and had treated Jameson with violence. On that point—to be candid—his case in international law was not as strong as he could have desired. To convict the Portuguese of a clear breach of the *modus vivendi* on the Pungwe was now Rhodes's object.

To this end he chose Sir John Willoughby as an Englishman of spirit and courage, not likely to be tame under Portuguese violence, for a 'laying on of hands' was exactly what Rhodes wanted to complete his case. When he communicated his plans to a friend, it was objected that poor Willoughby might lose his life.

'Not a bit,' Rhodes replied in his high falsetto. 'They will only hit him in the leg.' And he went on repeating, as was his way when excited, 'They will only hit him in the leg. They will only hit him in the leg. No, my dear fellow, they will only hit him in the leg.'

And so it came about that Rhodes gave to Sir John Willoughby the following letter:—

'THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY,  
'KIMBERLEY, March 28, 1891.

'DEAR WILLOUGHBY,—I want you to go with Johnson's vessel as representative of the Charter Co. in order to supervise the arrangements.—Yours,  
C. J. RHODES.'

And to Johnson, now senior partner in the well-known firm of Messrs. Johnson, Heany, and Borrow, merchants, contractors, shipowners, coachowners, and forwarding agents, Cecil Rhodes sent the following letter of instructions :—

‘ Sir John Willoughby has agreed to go. You must of course give him full charge and inform your people to do exactly as he directs, in fact the whole thing under his charge. You should not confine him by any instructions : you should just talk to him and leave everything to him—instructing the Captain to do whatever he tells him, and also the Captain of *Agnes* with whom he must fall in. I think the *Agnes* should wait for Willoughby.’

The young Englishman, thus voted to this delicate task, deserves consideration, since he plays an important part in the story. Sir John Christopher Willoughby, of Baldon House in Oxfordshire, was the fifth Baronet of his line. His father, Sir John Pollard Willoughby, had been notable in his day as a servant of the East India Company, was for a time Political Agent in Kathiawar, where he succeeded in putting down infanticide among the Rajputs, and afterwards for many years Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay. Johnny was born on February 20, 1859. In due course he went to Eton, where, as the famous Dr. Warre informed his mother, ‘ he has shown energy and perseverance in doing what he undertakes,’ and to Trinity College, Cambridge. Both at Eton and afterwards he excelled as a rifle-shot.<sup>1</sup> He had from the first a passion for anything connected with soldiering, and found

<sup>1</sup> In 1878 he commanded the Eton team at Wimbledon and won the shield, with the highest score made up to that time. It was considered a great event in Eton, which had not won the shield for ten years, and Johnny returned to the tune of ‘ See the Conquering Hero comes ’ to be received by the Provost in shorts and silk stockings.

his true vocation in the Blues, where he was a first-class regimental officer. Wherever there was a fight, there Willoughby was sure to be found. He was at the battles of Kassassin and Tel el Kebir, and in the march to Cairo in the Egyptian Campaign of 1882; and he was in charge of a division of Transport and Camel Corps in the Nile Campaign of 1884-1885.

'I expected I should be in a funk; but I wasn't,' he writes to his mother of his first battle, and if it is safe to say it of any man, it is safe to say of Willoughby—by universal testimony he never was 'in a funk' of anything. He keeps his mother informed of strange events in matter-of-fact, soldierly letters. He grieves that he was not in the Abu Klea fight where his dear friend Burnaby was killed, trying to rally the square, with many another good man; mourns over the death of Sir Herbert Stewart; is in high hopes that Gordon will be saved, and full of honest indignation at the 'grand old crocodile' whom he blames for the disaster of Khartoum. Taking three or four hundred camels a thousand miles over desert country, under a tropical sun, only whetted Willoughby's pleasure in Africa, and when the campaign was over, he set out with Sir Robert Harvey upon a shooting expedition in the neighbourhood of Kilimanjaro.<sup>1</sup>

Up that mountain he went to the height of 15,000 feet; but 'did not stay long as we were disappointed in finding no game.' However, as he is proud to inform his mother, he did not do badly on the whole, for he shot, besides a variety of other big game, no less than sixteen rhinoceroses—one at five yards

<sup>1</sup> Of this trip Sir John Willoughby gives an account in his book, *East Africa and its Big Game*.

range as it was charging him. 'There is,' he says, 'little or no danger in shooting them if you keep cool, as they are very stupid animals.'

We may suppose that Sir John Willoughby came to know Frank Rhodes (who was A.D.C. to Sir Herbert Stewart) in Egypt; but in whatever way the introduction came Cecil Rhodes made good choice when he chose Johnny to be Second-in-Command of the Pioneer Expedition under Pennefather. Willoughby was a wonderful transport officer; no detail escaped him. He was tireless, tenacious, indefatigable, imperturbable; and his dogged cheerfulness, and a certain staunchness in his character, won for him the friendship of Jameson—of whom, for the rest of his life, he remained the devoted worshipper. There was nothing that Willoughby would not have done for Jameson. Such was the man whom Rhodes chose for his design against the Portuguese.

At the beginning of April 1891 the S.S. *Norseman* (of the Union Company), attended by two other vessels, the *Agnes* and the *Shark*, and three lighters on which were placed large stores of goods and provisions to be delivered to traders in Mashonaland, was despatched from Durban. The *Norseman* carried a mail-bag, and among her passengers was Sir John Willoughby, who had with him five Englishmen and one hundred natives. He was charged with the duty of making a road from the highest navigable point on the Pungwe in the direction of Mashonaland.

This little flotilla arrived at Beira anchorage on April 13, at 9 A.M., and was escorted into the Bay by the Portuguese warship *Auxila*, which had picked it up 25 miles to the south. It found two more gun-boats, the *Tameza* and the *Liberal*, inside. The port

was full of excited soldiers, and the Portuguese authorities were also in a state of high tension, for they showered stern but contradictory orders upon the Englishmen. The position was not improved by the arrival of a Portuguese armed tug, the *Buffalo*, with two British prisoners on board who had been taken on the Busi River, on their way from Mashonaland to Sofala.

Sir John offered to comply with the conditions of the *modus vivendi* by the payment of the 3 per cent. Customs duty; but the Customs refused to take the money, and the Governor-General sent word that the expedition could not be allowed to go any farther owing to the unsettled state of the country.

Sir Henry Loch had issued orders to the Captain of the *Agnes* before the expedition started that he was not to disobey the Portuguese authorities; but Sir John Willoughby deemed it his duty to carry matters a point further, and on the morning of the 15th he got his little flotilla ready to go up river.

At 3.20 P.M. the tug *Agnes*, with the two lighters in tow, preceded by the launch *Shark*, got under weigh and went about a quarter of a mile up the mouth of the Pungwe. Thereupon the gunboat *Limpopo* ran up abreast of the *Agnes* on the port side at a distance of a hundred yards with all guns manned and run out ready for action; the flagship *Liberal* steamed round to the starboard side, and also trained her guns on the flotilla. The *Tameza*, which lay ahead, opened the ball with a blank shot.

These attentions convinced Sir John Willoughby that he had gone far enough to meet every punctilio, and not waiting to be 'shot in the leg,' he gave orders for the expedition to stop.



The end of it was that the Portuguese Commandant took Sir John Willoughby with his second-in-command, Captain Roach, and his medical officer, Dr. Wilson, to see the Governor-General, informing them on the way that it was lucky for them that they had been stopped, as there were many soldiers up the river. Ashore they became the centre of a mob of excited soldiers who hooted, threatened, and cheered for Portugal—which made Sir John Willoughby, who disliked indiscipline above all things, extremely disdainful.

The conversation between the Governor-General and Sir John Willoughby was conducted with great formality and elaborate hauteur upon both sides. Both explained that they were acting under superior orders; the Governor-General narrated with considerable feeling the various high-handed actions of the Company. Sir John retorted that his proceedings were in accordance with the *modus vivendi*; but that the matter was now—after the violence and gross insults to which he had been subjected, and in particular after the firing upon the British flag—between the British Government and the Government of Portugal.

In fine, the expedition sailed back to Durban. Sir John Willoughby in a report to the High Commissioner, dated April 28, 1891, gave a full account of the outrage; Her Majesty's Government addressed a severe note to the Government at Lisbon, and Sir George Petre, the British Minister, was instructed to inquire whether the *modus vivendi* was at an end; to add that if the Portuguese Government would not protect British subjects a British man-of-war would be sent to Beira; and finally that 'if the transit of peaceful passengers and of supplies

were stopped, all responsibilities for the consequences must fall upon Portugal.' <sup>1</sup>

A correspondence followed: H.M.SS. *Brisk*, *Mohawk*, and *Magicienne* dropped one after the other into Beira Bay, and Captain Pipon on H.M.S. *Magicienne* was appointed to act as British Consul at that port with the happiest results. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. 6495. Nos. 146, 156.

<sup>2</sup> For much in this and subsequent chapters the author is indebted to the Lord Loch papers, which the present Lord Loch was so good as to allow him to see.

## CHAPTER XV

### A DOUBLE ATTACK

' . . . in counsels it is good to see dangers, and in execution not to see them, except they be very great.'—Bacon.

THERE is more than a suggestion, both in the coincidence of events and in the official papers, that the Transvaal Boers and the Portuguese were acting against the Company on a common plan. From the Portuguese side a military concentration at Massikessi, from the Transvaal a concentration of trekkers on the Limpopo, threatened a double attack which would tax all the courage of Jameson and the statesmanship of Rhodes.

The pretext from the Transvaal was the famous Adendorff concession, said to have been granted on August 5, 1890, by Sebasha (*alias* Chibe) and Mozobe, two chiefs of the Banyai. These were a people who occupied a tract of land some 200 miles by 100 miles in extent, north of the Limpopo, and paid tribute to Lobengula; but in the document produced by Adendorff Sebasha and Mozobe were represented as ceding the whole country from the Limpopo to the Zambesi.

The concessionaires, to wit Johannes du Preez, Louis Adendorff, Florious de Maijer, and Cornelis Brummer, upon their part promised protection against the raids of other tribes and the payment of 'fifty good head of cattle or two blankets in place of every head of cattle in default.'

But not only were the chiefs of the Banyai unable to concede territories which did not belong to them ; they denied having given any concession at all. Chibe, it appears, was not a name but a title. The late chief or Chibe of Banyailand had been flayed alive by Lobengula about the year 1878, and the chief or Chibe of Banyailand who ruled in 1890 declared he had given nothing whatever. Sebasha was not the Chibe of Banyailand but his grandson, and a chief of no importance.<sup>1</sup>

These circumstances, however, did not seem relevant to Adendorff and his friends. It happened that in the autumn of 1890, after he had formed his Government, Rhodes made a journey to the North, intending, if he could, to visit Matabeleland. He got as far as Macloutsi, in the north of Bechuanaland, but there the High Commissioner stopped him, fearing, with reason, to place so valuable a hostage in the power of the Matabele. Thereupon Rhodes turned his mule wagons, crossed the Crocodile River, and went down through the northern Transvaal to visit President Kruger at Pretoria. On the way he was intercepted by Adendorff and his friend, Barend Vorster, who tried to persuade him to buy the 'concession,' and threatened dire consequences if he refused. Rhodes was not a man to be blackmailed : he told them that their concession was worthless and he would have nothing to say to it.

The concessionaires thereupon set to work to organise a trek upon a national scale, and to that end engaged the support of General Joubert and other influential people in the Transvaal. Adendorff

<sup>1</sup> Rhodes, Dr. Jameson, Selous, Brabant, and D. C. de Waal saw the true chief at the beginning of November 1891. A very interesting account of the interview will be found in chapter xxvi. of de Waal's book, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland*.

set out his case in a letter which several Dutch South African papers published. After a brief history of the concession he said that 'there is already in every part of the country a great movement, and hundreds of people are preparing to migrate and leave this Republic for good, to go and live there in a good and very fruitful highland, but which also has winter ground very much better than Matabeleland, into which Mr. Rhodes wishes to lead people.'

Adendorff protested that he and his friends 'did not want to keep it for themselves, or sell it out under burdensome conditions or in a speculative way under a military government as the Rhodes Chartered Company is doing.' On the contrary, they invited Afrikaners to trek thither with them, and nominated some fourteen representatives of the Transvaal, the Free State, and the Cape Colony to be 'temporary leaders' pending the appearance of 'their Joshuas or Calebs.'

Adendorff ended his epistle with the boast that 'the God of Heaven, who administers all things, can alone put a stop to this trek, but men cannot,' and an admonition to Rhodes and his Charter not to 'come and trouble us in our own lawful land.'

This appeal was pressed with a great deal of enthusiasm by the Republican Party, not only in the Transvaal, but in other parts of South Africa, and it was estimated that by June 1, 1891, 2000 burghers would meet on the Limpopo prepared to cross into the promised land.<sup>1</sup>

And now Rhodes was to show the strength both of his policy and his position in South Africa. He set the formidable machinery of the Afrikaner Bond to work against the Adendorff trek. His

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Hofmeyr*, p. 414.

speech to the Bond at the Paarl on April 13 made his favourite appeal to interest and reason.

‘I look,’ he said, ‘at this interior development from a practical point of view. Perhaps twenty years ago *one of you* had a farm, and, while *you* were alone, it was big enough for you ; but since then, there have come four or five sons, and some of them have to seek new homes, and many have to move North. Now, I don’t think any of *you* will blame me when I say that, holding that idea, I thought it would be wise to take the balance of the North for the Cape Colony.’

Again :—

‘I took over this new country in trust for the Cape Colony, and I said that I would take *your* young men, I would allow whatever produce *you* send to go in free, and I would not ask *you* for any money.’

Rhodes reminded his Dutch audience that he had taken any one of ‘*your* people’ who had cared to come to him ; that he was preparing a land settlement on that basis. He had asked them to send men to report on the country so that they should not be idly taken away with no prospect.

‘I have done all these things and now what has happened ? A gentleman named Mr. Adendorff, and Mr. Barend Vorster and Mr. du Preez say they are going to take the result of the labours of *your* sons. When I came down from Tuli I visited Pietersburg, and I met Mr. Vorster and Mr. Adendorff. I saw them on several occasions, and Mr. Vorster finally came to me and said he had got a local grant from a native chief and wanted me to buy it. . . . I said to him frankly that I had not much opinion of his grant. He said, “If you don’t buy it I shall give you trouble.” . . . It is a question of a new country which *your* people have tried to rescue from barbarism and add to civilisation. But these people came to me and said unless I gave them so many thousand pounds

they would induce some ignorant farmers to go in and murder *our* people in the country.'

And he kept on repeating his statements as was his habit when excited :—

'That is the case as it stands ; you cannot get out of it. I hope *you* won't be annoyed at this. Because I would not give Mr. Barend Vorster and Mr. Adendorff a certain sum of money, they have threatened me in the Zoutpansberg that they would give me trouble, that they would fight *my* people unless I would give them so many globular thousand pounds.'

It was a simple and a direct appeal, and it was reinforced by several references, direct and indirect, to the way in which the Transvaal was shutting the agricultural produce of Cape Colony out of the Johannesburg market.<sup>1</sup>

The assembled Bondsmen not only applauded but they set to work at once to defeat the Adendorff trek. J. H. Hofmeyr and A. B. Hofmeyr, the President and Secretary of the Bond, signed a document which was in effect a counter-manifesto to Adendorff's appeal. It set forth how the Chartered Company had been formed, 'of which *our* Prime Minister is the Managing Director,' and how it had taken possession of the land 'by means of an armed force, composed principally of young Afrikaners.'

'Knowing all this,' the letter proceeds, 'the report that a great trek is being organised outside of the Company, to go and take possession of the same territory, and there establish, if need be by force of arms, an independent Republic, is calculated to fill every one who has at heart the prosperity of South Africa with great anxiety.' The Company, so the letter went on, did not intend to yield before

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, p. 278 et seq.

the trek. His Excellency, the High Commissioner, had already issued a proclamation to give warning against the enterprise. 'And the British Government has had a telegram sent to the Transvaal to the effect that they will consider all attempts to establish a Republic in, or to make any encroachment on, the British sphere of influence, as hostile deeds against Her Majesty the Queen.'<sup>1</sup>

It is remarkable, indeed, when we consider its past and future history, that the Bond should then be working for the extension of the British Empire against the extension of the Republic. But so it was, and the fact proves the soundness and success of the policy of Rhodes.

Jameson was in Kimberley on April 15, 1891, for on that day he writes from Kimberley to his artist brother Middleton, sending him two drafts for £200, with the 'suggestion that you might use it in a trip out to see me in Mashonaland' as 'it is a marvellously fine country—for landscape at all events.' In this letter there is not a word about the journey to Gungunhana, but he says in his laconic way, 'I have given up doctoring and fairly thrown my lot in with the Company, which is going to be a great success, whether I am or not.'

Rhodes's reference to this final decision we find in his speech at the second annual meeting of the British South Africa Company:<sup>2</sup>—

'My friend, Dr. Jameson, agreed to assume the charge of the country. Dr. Jameson had been up in the country before, having just got back from a seven hundred miles walking tour—across the country of Gungunhana, a chief from whom he had obtained the whole of the coast region as

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<sup>1</sup> *Life of Hofmeyr*, p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> November 29, 1892.



a concession. Dr. Jameson was suffering from a very bad malarial fever ; but when I asked him to go back he agreed to do so without a word. He was fortunate enough to fall upon a trek of dissatisfied Transvaal agitators, who were determined to take the northern country from this Company. By the measures he took and his good management Dr. Jameson dispersed the trekkers, and many of them have since taken land under the Company's flag.'

Rhodes, then, again appealed to Jameson in his difficulty, and Jameson again responded to the appeal.

In Sam's long letter of April 23, already so largely quoted, there is something to the same effect. 'Rhodes,' Sam reports, 'now places absolute trust in him and allows him practically an absolutely free hand.'

And then Sam tells Tom of their brother's position as the result of these successes :—

'He [Jameson] is the moving spirit in the political *dénouements* that are daily developing, and events are, to a great extent, answering his expectations, and he sees his plans steadily being fulfilled. He has absolute confidence that he will have Beira a free port for the Chartered Company within two months. He takes up with him next week the Secretary of the Company with staff—a surveyor-general, a legal adviser, chief surgeon, etc., etc., etc., and means to have the Central office and Headquarters in Mashonaland, and not in either Cape Town or Kimberley. Kimberley office he has now closed up. The Port Beira row has exactly fallen out as he hoped and wished and indeed worked for, the Portuguese playing most beautifully into his hands. . . . He is in receipt of no salary. He can at will dismiss Colquhoun and take his salary ; but he prefers to retain him as his subordinate till his year is up. He will then decide whether or no he will accept the Administratorship. Rhodes he tells me (in his vague way) has said he will see that the

London Board make him some presentation for all his valuable services. Of course Rhodes is one of those successful big men who can get the best possible work out of men and give very little in return. Lanner is intensely modest as to his own claims ; and Rhodes is proving signally deficient in recognising them. Lanner would never admit this for a moment. In fact, it would hurt him if I was to give him my opinion.

‘His own idea is it would be no pleasure to him to realise some thousands and go home ; the fun of that sort of thing is done for him. But it is intensely interesting to him to make this big kingdom a success. Then he has some thoughts of possibly going home and joining the London Board eventually. If the show bursts he says he can always go back to Pills.’

‘Lanner,’ in fact, had succeeded beyond, and indeed against Sam’s expectations, and Sam had to revise his judgment. ‘Since I have seen him this time I am not so confident that he has made much of a mistake in giving up pills for a time.’

Jameson must have made a flying visit to Cape Town, for on April 30, 1891, he writes from 22 Adderley Street in that city to Sam :—

‘I shall probably leave here in a week or less *via* Transvaal for Tuli and Mashonaland. I go to Zoutpansberg to see people at various places *re* this hostile Boer trek, which is our only real difficulty for political reasons ;—but which I am glad to say is fading daily. I have to see some people in Johannesburg, so if I do stay a night, of course I will come out to see Blanche, in any case he’d better remain in town.<sup>1</sup> Will wire you before to get rooms for self and Willoughby ; but hope to be able to go right through to Pretoria and farther. All this may be changed by some new aspect in Boer or Portuguese during the next few days. . . .’

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to Midge, who had anticipated his brother’s invitation and was already in Johannesburg with Sam.

Unfortunately for the smooth course of diplomacy Jameson's lieutenant, Sir John Willoughby, was the first to appear on the scene.

It should here be explained that, at that time, when difficulties arose between the gold-miners and the President, as frequently happened, J. B. Taylor, a Kimberley pioneer and an old hand in the Transvaal, was usually asked to mediate. Mr. Taylor had a good deal of influence with President Kruger, and he was also, as it happened, a friend of Jameson's. To Taylor, then, Willoughby went and begged him to arrange an interview with the President. The meeting was duly arranged for six o'clock the next morning, and Willoughby in his haughtiest manner opened the conversation.

'President Kruger,' he said, 'I understand that a party of Boers are about to cross the River Limpopo to go into Mashonaland. I think you ought to know that the Company have a force of armed men to arrest any intruders of that sort into that country. I think you ought to understand that if a Boer force attempt to cross the river it would be tantamount to war, not only against the Chartered Company, but also against Her Majesty's Government.'

President Kruger was not the sort of man to be bearded by a stripling. He knocked the ashes out of his pipe against his boot and replied:—

'Ef daar moot oorlog wys laat da oorlog wys.'<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Leyds, who was acting as interpreter, did not

<sup>1</sup> 'If there must be war, let there be war.' One of Willoughby's notebooks confirms the account of the incident given to the Author by Mr. Taylor. Thus for example: 'Kruger informed me there will be no trek. . . . I told him that if a trek crosses the Limpopo and will not stop we shall fire on them, and if that happens it will mean war with the Transvaal, not merely with the Chartered Company, but with the English nation. He said, "All right, if it is war, all right."'

translate this remark ; but it made Taylor, who understood it, very uncomfortable.

The moment the interview was over Leyds went to Sir Jacobus de Wet, the British Agent at Pretoria, and asked by what right Sir John Willoughby threatened the Republic. Was he accredited by Her Majesty's Government ? De Wet telegraphed to the High Commissioner, and the answer came at once, ' Disown Willoughby, and say Her Majesty's Government disown him altogether.'

Fortunately Jameson followed hard upon the heels of his lieutenant, and when he heard from his friend Taylor what had happened, he asked him to arrange another interview. Thus Kruger and Jameson met, and Taylor, who was present, testifies to Jameson's tact with the old man. In the lightest and pleasantest way he sounded Kruger on the threatened trek. The President protested that he had tried to stop ' these people,' as was indeed the fact. For Kruger at this time was honourably observing the Swaziland Convention. But his Commandant, General Joubert, as Jameson and Kruger well knew, was working with the trekkers. And Jameson reminded Kruger of this by remarking, ' After all they are your people.'

The interview was pleasant, and ended with an assurance from Kruger that the reports of the trek were very much exaggerated.

What Kruger thought of Jameson we do not know ; but Taylor has preserved a chance remark of Jameson on Kruger. It was the consolation of the Outlanders at that time to tell one another that after all they would not be for long under the harrow as Kruger was certainly dying of dropsy or some other disease.

And when Jameson came out he gave a medical man's opinion with his usual incisiveness.

'Damn you fellows,' he said to Taylor. 'You have all been telling us he has not another year to live, but he will see us all under—like an old elephant.'

And that indeed was an excellent description of Oom Paul, with his bulky body and small eyes, strong, cunning, obstinate, vicious when attacked—an old rogue elephant.

We may suppose that Lanner and Midge, now united, had a happy journey through the northern Transvaal, and that Jameson did what he could in the Zoutpansberg to damp down the trekkers. Then he made his arrangements upon the border and went on to Mashonaland, no doubt to settle with Colquhoun, who was leaving at the end of his year, and to look into the Portuguese trouble. There is a letter from Jameson to Sam dated May 25, 1891, which appears to be written from Salisbury. But it is mainly taken up with small, private, financial matters not worth recording. It concludes, however, with cheerful news of the settlement: 'We had a capital race meeting yesterday, and altogether people fairly cheerful. I was at Hartley Hill the other day. Two mills crushing continuously; and some of the reefs condemned by the experts turning out very well. Victoria still more promising.'

We have surmised that what took Jameson away from the Limpopo in that somewhat critical month of May 1891 was the Portuguese trouble. For upon the 11th of that month a strong force of Portuguese and native auxiliaries made a surprise attack on the Company's police camp near Umtali, and pulled down the Company's flag. Captain Heyman, who was in command in those regions, was delighted to

have such an opportunity ; he had asked Rhodes how much he should take and Rhodes had replied, ' Take all you can get and ask me afterwards.' <sup>1</sup>

Captain Heyman, then, collected every man who could walk, forty-five in all, and marched across the Penhalonga Range, intending to go to Beira. He found the Portuguese force drawn up in front of Massikessi fort. It consisted of a battalion of Portuguese troops and some four hundred native auxiliaries. The Portuguese formally paraded their men preparatory to an attack, and the Company's police picked them off from a kopje on which they had taken up their position and also peppered them well with their single little 7-pounder gun. This long-distance engagement lasted for two hours, and the police could see the Portuguese officers urging their men to charge the position. At last the Portuguese charged within two hundred yards ; but the fire of the police was too much for them, and they broke and fled. The Portuguese officers, by all accounts, behaved well in difficult circumstances. They tried to keep their men at it with the flats of their swords, and when their force broke and ran, they turned and walked slowly back to the fort. According to one version, it was found afterwards that one of the Portuguese officers, or rather a Frenchman in the Portuguese service, was wounded rather badly in the neck, and another in the arm. ' They made no sign, however, until just as the rising ground was about to hide them from view they turned, took off

<sup>1</sup> Sir Melville Heyman, as he now is, is Managing Director of the Willoughby Company at Bulawayo. He told the author that in these instructions Rhodes was repeating the words which Lord Salisbury had used to Rhodes, when Rhodes asked the British Minister how much he should take and Salisbury said to Rhodes, ' Take all you can get and ask me afterwards.'

their hats to the English, and strolled slowly back to the fort.<sup>1</sup>

Captain Heyman was now rather at a loss what to do, with a solid fort before his forty-five men.<sup>2</sup> However, he kept on bombarding the fort until his last round of gun ammunition was fired and the gun-trail broke. Then he spent a perplexed night in the open; but to his amazement when dawn broke no Portuguese flag was to be seen.

Suspecting a ruse, he contrived another, and sent his Medical Officer in with a flag of truce to offer surgical aid to the wounded. The doctor found the fort empty.

Captain Heyman had managed the affair very well: he had rigged up several Scotch carts covered with canvas to look like guns, and by other devices contrived to give the Portuguese the impression that he was not only very much stronger than he actually was, but commanded the vanguard of a larger force behind. Under this impression the Portuguese had evacuated the position under cover of night.

Captain Heyman entered the fort and found to his glee that it was well provisioned. As a matter of fact, a convoy had come in the day before the attack. There were, for example, no less than forty demi-johns of vino tinto in the cellar, and although Captain Heyman thought it wise to smash all but ten, his force was served with wine-rations about twelve times a day while they remained at Massikessi!

Moreover there were guns, including three 3-pounder Hotchkiss, six 1-pounder Hotchkiss, and three machine guns, with a very large supply of rifle

<sup>1</sup> *Adventures in Mashonaland*, by Two Hospital Nurses (Rose Blonnerhassett and Lucy Sleeman), 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Heyman had also an auxiliary force of Umtata's natives, who acted well as carriers but fled at the first shot.

ammunition. Captain Heyman thought it well to despatch these spoils of war over the Penhalonga Range to Umtali, but sent on Lieutenant Fiennes with a small detachment to take Chimoio on the road to Beira. There, of all people, whom should he meet but Bishop Knight Bruce, who told him that Major Sapte was coming up behind with orders to the police to turn back. And this was what happened: early next morning Major Sapte arrived with orders which Captain Heyman felt he could not well disregard, and so, very reluctantly, he gave up the idea of taking Beira.<sup>1</sup>

Jameson now thought that he could safely leave the eastern frontier to itself for a moment and return to the South. On June 8, 1891, he writes from Fort Tuli to Sam:—

‘Have kept fairly free of fever; but bothered with an abominable dose of piles which commenced as soon as I left Pretoria, and don’t improve much—a nuisance not to be able to sit on a horse at present but have had plenty of work to do here in getting staff in order, etc. News *re* Portuguese so far satisfactory—but don’t expect it will last and from my point of view there ought to be a rumpus to help us. Am trying to get the authorities below to allow me to go on up above as I feel sure the Boer question is pretty safe now. . . . Glad to hear from below you have started off the battery. Thank Lionel Phillips for the whisky which I forgot—also Jim Taylor and Bettelheim for all their kindness to me. Harris is here and a great help—enormous energy—he will leave in about a week and I hope I shall get on without him. Will write to Curry about Boyd and if that does not succeed

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<sup>1</sup> It is said that when Rhodes afterwards heard the story from Heyman, he said, ‘But why didn’t you put Sapte in irons and say he was drunk?’ Major Sapte, it should be explained, was Military Secretary to Sir Henry Loch, and carried instructions from the High Commissioner that he was to order the Company’s forces to withdraw from Massikessi.



will do something for him in Mashonaland when I see things in order. Here Harris is a continuous pen machine. . . .’

Upon June 24 it was reported that 112 Boers were on the Floris Drift, and trying to cross the river. But everything was ready for them. The north bank of the river over against the drift was manned by a detachment of the Company’s police, and every other drift was guarded in the same manner, while the Bechuanaland police lay at Mafeking ready to support the Company’s men at any threatened point.

Nevertheless Colonel Ferreira crossed the river with two other leaders. These three were promptly arrested and word sent to Jameson.

Jameson arrived. He released the prisoners, and crossed over with them to the Boer camp on the other side. And here we get another glimpse of Jameson’s steely mettle. With that armed and angry concourse of disappointed frontiersmen he argued; he chaffed them, he twitted them—easily, good-naturedly, with that infectious appearance he had of being amused. Here they were, he said, disowned by their own Government, and trying to fight another. What asses! Why, the Chartered Company was eager and willing to have them, and allot them land as *bona fide* settlers. Why force a door which was open?

These arguments prevailed, reinforced as they were by the appearance next morning of the Bechuanaland police under Major Goold-Adams. A few of the trekkers took land under the Company. The rest gradually melted away without a shot being fired.

And although the pertinacious Adendorff continued to agitate for some time longer, his trek had suffered a decisive defeat. Never again did it recover strength sufficient to attempt a crossing.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MEETING IN MASHONALAND

WITH this last trouble behind him, Jameson wrote to his brother Sam a letter which briefly foreshadows the work ahead:—

‘Things have gone very well so far,’ he writes from Tuli, ‘and I think the Boer hostile trek is fairly finished. I leave for Fort Salisbury to-morrow morning—if Rhodes agrees, which I feel pretty sure he will. Have made myself fairly disagreeable here, clearing out rubbish, etc.—but will have a still worse time of the same in Mashonaland I expect. However, Rhodes will back up everything I think—at all events he has done so up to this—so everything will come right. . . .’

‘Clearing out rubbish’ was Jameson’s short way of describing the retrenchments which he had agreed with Rhodes to carry out, in circumstances which we must now consider.

The pioneers, as we know, were full of the idea that gold was to be found in the interior. Had they but known it, the valorous Portuguese had set out from Portugal three hundred years before, expecting to find gold in the ground ‘like ginger,’ and ‘like yams’—‘forced up by the growing trees and held in the forks of the branches.’ Barreto and his men had marched up the Zambesi and then set out southwards in search of the gold-mines of the Monomotapa. But all that they had found was

fever, a few Kafirs washing for gold-dust, and 'a hole in the ground.'

The no less hopeful and hardly less credulous pioneers scattered abroad fossicking and prospecting from Tuli, Victoria, and Salisbury. Tuli became a busy town—with a newspaper and several bars—on the mere prospect; but the expectations never came to anything, and it dwindled as it had arisen, like Jonah's gourd, in a night. Victoria did somewhat better. Round the settlement there certainly were reefs that yielded a high percentage of gold. The Fernspruit Mine, which lay somewhere between the present town of Victoria and the Providential Pass, gave at first from 10 to 600 ounces a ton, but experienced miners had small faith in these high yields, remembering Pilgrim's Rest and other such bitter lessons in the fickleness of Fortune—a goddess most capricious where she is most bountiful. The richest reefs are often the first to fail.

The miners worked hard and lived hard, with very little thought either of their health or of their future. Bully beef, mealie porridge, and whisky made their fare, and they slept in tents or rude huts beside their workings. Nature does not allow such liberties in virgin country within the tropics, and fever began to take a heavy toll of them. Of the sixteen miners at work on the Fernspruit Mine in the rainy season of 1891 every one was down with fever. It was not ordinary malaria, but frequently 'jaundice,' as it was then commonly described, or blackwater as we now call it, a fever of which men die swiftly.

So, too, with the mines round Salisbury. It cost fourteen fever-stricken prospectors fourteen days to travel from Hartley Hill to the Fort; they arrived in their shirts, or rather in fragments of them. One

man in high delirium insisted upon quitting the wagon at every outspan and dancing stark-naked on the veld.

The situation of these pioneers, always precarious, in the summer rains became impossible. Swollen rivers blocked the long road from Tuli to Victoria so that the wagons were stalled between them and their transport riders died of hunger or of fever. In several cases whole wagon-loads of new-comers perished on the way. The small police-stations at the drifts were often reduced to a desperate plight. At one, both men of a patrol died, and their bodies were found long afterwards half-eaten by the native pigs. As the convoys could not come up from Tuli for three months at a time, the pioneers ran out of provisions. The mealie meal went rotten, and such commodities as coffee, sugar, flour, pepper, and peas ran up to famine prices. Whisky—dreadful thought to the pioneer!—grew scarcer and scarcer until it stood at £1 a bottle, and clothing and boots were not to be had. Quinine, for a time, was £5 an ounce.

In their perplexity the pioneers of Salisbury bethought themselves of the Portuguese trading-stations at Tete on the Zambesi, some 250 miles away, and a party was sent across country to bring back provisions. It was led by one John Scott, whose white companion, Smith, died of fever on the way, and whose natives then deserted him. Thus alone in the Bush, he happened upon a young Kafir, who guided him through a country of grass ten feet high and always drenching wet. In this way he reached the Lucia River, two days' journey from his goal, where he was struck down by fever. But the young Kafir brought him into Tete, where he was nursed back to health, and there from an Indian

trader he bought goods sufficient to load two hundred men. In such precarious fashion the pioneers managed to exist in those early days. They could not well have survived, however, but for the strong arm of the Company, which bore the principal part of the loss and cost of bringing up supplies, and wherever its wagons were allowed the Colonists to have what they required.

Major Johnson and his partners Borrow and Heany tried hard to open the road to Beira ; but the Portuguese, the tsetse fly, the fever, the lions, the Bush, and the mountains were fatal obstacles. Their road was never more than a track or forest path, strewn with dead horses and oxen, abandoned wagons and broken-down coaches. Their river steamers stranded on the sand-banks and mud-islands, and the profits they had made by their famous contract for the expedition were soon scattered along that fatal trail.

Still, the settlers had their rifles, and game was usually plentiful. When bully beef failed, they consoled themselves with venison, for shirts they tied strips of entambo bark round their waists, and for boots made sandals of raw antelope hide softened in water.

It was no new experience for settlers in a new country. Close upon two hundred and fifty years before, van Riebeeck and his company had suffered much the same hardships in their first rainy season in Table Valley—their gardens washed away, their tents and huts blown down, their cattle stolen by Hottentots or killed by lions, their stores exhausted or mouldy, and only the indomitable courage of their Commander had saved them from despair. When the 1820 settlers landed near what is now Port Elizabeth they suffered from the same evils in the

same degree. Lions killed their cattle, elephants trampled down their fences and their fields, rust blighted their wheat, fever weakened their sinews and lowered their spirits. But these analogies could not be expected to comfort our Mashonaland pioneers; settlers are seldom blessed with historical memories.

Cecil Rhodes was determined to visit his new country, and started again in the latter part of 1891. The first attempt he had made by Bechuanaland; his second was by the East coast. Major Johnson, then developing the Pungwe route by steamer and coach, and D. C. de Waal went with him. By September 22 they reached Delagoa Bay, which Rhodes had tried but failed to buy from the Portuguese, and the party visited Lourenço Marques, then a filthy, feverish, broken-down, evil-smelling place. 'It is indeed much to be regretted,' says de Waal, 'that these harbours did not fall into the hands of van Riebeeck, van der Stel, or van Tulbagh—active and energetic men who would have turned those naturally beautiful spots into delightful pleasure-resorts, in which the Cape would have a splendid market for its wines and other products.'

At Inhambane Rhodes engaged fifteen natives as carriers for the journey, but both there and at Beira, which they reached on September 26, the Portuguese officials did all in their power to prevent the boys from going on. By the aid, however, of Denis Doyle, who was also of the party, and of Captain Pipon, of H.M.S. *Magicienne*, these troubles were overcome, and they were soon steaming up the Pungwe in the *Agnes*, a river steamer brought out by 'Messrs. Johnson and Company.'

A very different voyage this from the desperate venture of the Berthon boat; by day sheltered under

the awnings from the tropical sun, by night at anchor and comfortably listening to the lions and the hyenas — ‘we sat there with the gloomy stream around us, the black forests yonder on our right and left, and the starry heaven above us’—even de Waal becomes poetical.

Sixty miles up-stream was as far as the *Agnes* could go, and there, at the Portuguese military post of Nunes Ferreira, they inspanned their horses and loaded their carriers. Major Johnson went with the cart, Rhodes and the rest continued by boat to Mapandas, a Portuguese station seventy miles from Beira, where two pioneers had established a comfortable little hotel. Thence they went on with two carts and three ponies; but as rain fell and the road was vile they made poor progress, and their nights were disturbed by the growling and grunting of lions near at hand.

The travellers passed Sarmento, on the Pungwo, and the road grew worse and worse. ‘I saw,’ says de Waal, ‘how our friend Johnson had imposed on us. Instead of travelling on a wagon-road, as he had said we would, we were going in a Portuguese footpath, and so wretched was that footpath that in many parts of it a horse could not be ridden.’ They had to leave one of their carts behind with all its harness and furniture, and had constantly to unpack the other, and carry the loads themselves over sluits and marshes in a scorching heat of between 100 and 120 degrees. Then they had to abandon their second cart and push on as best they could on horseback ‘through a bamboo forest whose growth was so dense that we could scarcely see the sky above us.’ They passed ‘Bowden, the well-known cricketer . . . with some thirty Kafirs, who

were carrying flour, liquor, and other provisions for his shop at Umtali.' Heat, fever, and fatigue were almost too much for poor Bowden, and Rhodes gave him one precious bottle of whisky, then considered a prophylactic against fever. De Waal protested, but Rhodes proceeded to give Bowden the pony which de Waal was riding.

And so they went on. Once they passed a Portuguese Lema or Governor, being carried in a litter, 'lying upon his back with a book in his hand,' and followed by fifty attendants. And they passed many deserted ox-wagons, 'the animals that had brought them there having been stung to death by the destructive tsetse fly.'

They spent one night under the Penhalonga Mountains, where they slept soundly despite the roaring of the lions at a spot near where a trader called Theal had been devoured by a lion a month before, and not far from where, three months before, Selous, lying alone in a little shelter of boughs, had shot three lions as they nosed and pawed at the branches. Then they crossed the mountains, now the boundary between Mashonaland and Mozambique, and came down to Umtali Camp, 17 miles from Massikessi. 'Here,' says de Waal, 'we met Mr. Heany, Dr. Jameson, and some other well-known gentlemen. It was to us a moment of rejoicing when we entered Umtali Camp.'

Thus Rhodes and Jameson met in the promised land. We can imagine the handgrip between these two, who now stood together on the edge of the country they had won—a country half as big as Europe, stretching into the Dark Half-known of tropical Africa and the sources of the Nile.

Rhodes must have had misgivings as well as



rejoicing in his heart, for these 252 miles from Beira to Umtali—the deserted wagons, the rotting carcasses—told him clearly in how precarious a position they still were, marooned, so to speak, upon the roof of Africa, one road barred by the tsetse fly, the other by distance and threatened by the Matabele.

‘I went round,’ Rhodes afterwards told his shareholders, ‘and met Dr. Jameson in the country. I found the position at the time as follows: a discontented population of about 1500 people and an expenditure of about £250,000 a year upon police. Things looked rather bad, because it was not only the large number of police, but also the feeding of them, which had to be done by carting the food for 1700 miles from the coast. Dr. Jameson and myself talked matters over, and he said, “If you will give me £3000 a month I can pull through.”’<sup>1</sup>

At Umtali Dr. Jameson sent Rhodes to see the hospital started not long before by two English nurses, Rose Blennerhassett and Lucy Sleeman. On October 10, 1891, according to these ladies, ‘Mr. Rhodes rode up alone. His appearance and Roman Emperor type of head are too well known to need description. We took him into the hut, knowing our patients would like to see him. It was not without difficulty that we persuaded him to enter. He said that if he were ill himself he should not like a stranger to come and look at him. But when we told him that the patients would be greatly disappointed if they did not see him, he yielded at once. . . . How much would we have? Would £100 do? Amply, we said. Well, he thought he had better make it £150. . . . We were especially charmed by the great man’s simple manners and

<sup>1</sup>At second meeting of Chartered Company, November 29, 1892.

boyish enjoyment of a joke. Of his many kindnesses we thought most of his having remembered to replace the small medical library which had been lost with our luggage. The books not being procurable at the Cape, this busy man took the trouble of having them sent for to England.' <sup>1</sup>

The party left Umtali at five o'clock on Saturday October 10, 1891, in a spring wagon with eight horses and mules and a cart with four. At the Umtali River they outspanned at a spot where a traveller a fortnight before had been carried off by a lion. 'He walked a small distance from his ox-cart at evening, when suddenly the Kafirs he had left at the cart heard a sort of smothered cry, and then all was quiet again. Never again did those Kafirs behold their master. Where he had trodden last the fresh footprints of a lion were to be seen.' They rode into Salisbury at five o'clock on the evening of October 16, 1891.

It was already a little town with a European population of about 400, and the seat of Government. 'All was life there,' says de Waal. 'A little outside the town a large number of outspanned ox-wagons were to be seen, belonging to farmers, who, with their wagons, were temporarily camping there. They had come to sell their farm produce to the Salisbury people.'

Colonel Pennefather was now in charge of the Company's Commissariat Department. 'I could hardly believe my eyes,' says de Waal, 'when I saw the immense store of groceries it contained, and not less surprised was I to behold the stock of ploughs, picks, spades, shovels, galvanised iron, and other such articles. There were also stored thousands of

<sup>1</sup> *Adventures in Mashonaland*, by Two Hospital Nurses, 1893.

bags of mealies, and as many cases of biscuits, sardines, pickles, potted meat, and what not.'

The Company had saved the situation; there was now a scarcity of nothing but liquor. Yet there was great murmuring among the people, and this discontent took shape in several deputations.

The story is told, either of this visit or another, of how Rhodes received one of these deputations in his tent in the early morning, as he sat with nothing on but a towel, swabbing himself with a sponge in a canvas bath. In this odd position, for he was never troubled by the conventions, Rhodes gave the settlers a little sermon on the great work they were doing for the future of South Africa and the Empire.

Whereupon one of the deputation, a dour Scottish trader, replied:—

'I would have ye know, Mr. Rhodes, that we didna come here for posterity.'

De Waal gives an account of one of these conferences, from which it appears that the pioneers, in Salisbury at all events, did not get much sympathy from the Managing Director.

"Well," Mr. Rhodes answered them, "I know that when the rivers were full the wagons could not cross, but I could not help that. You certainly cannot expect to be already provided with roads, telegraphs, bridges, post-carts, etc., all within the short space of twelve months. You have any amount of linen goods, beads, and such-like articles, have you not?"

"Yes," was the reply, "but we can't eat them."

"Well," the representative of the Chartered Company rejoined, "if you were really hard up for food, why did you not take them to the Kafir kraals

in the neighbourhood and exchange them for eatables as we did on our way ? ”

‘ They felt rather in a corner and had hardly anything to say.

‘ “ Every kraal,” continued the Premier, “ is stocked with mealies, meal, rice, pumpkins, beans, and eggs. What more do you want ? No,” he concluded, “ your agitation has not arisen from want of food, but from something else : it is want of *liquor* that displeases you.” ’

Rhodes and his party left Salisbury on October 20 with three wagons, each drawn by a team of twelve oxen, and five saddle horses. Dr. Jameson and one or two others went with them, and so together they trekked over the open country, riding, shooting, talking with prospectors, visiting gold-mines, and speculating on the ancient workings that followed the reefs sometimes a hundred feet down into the earth.

They went by Fort Charter, and there met Selous with the mails from Victoria, and on by the road the pioneers had made to Victoria, through a fertile but deserted country, seeing everywhere the ruins of villages destroyed by the Matabele. On October 23 they reached Fort Victoria, where all the rocks appeared in the eyes of de Waal ‘ more or less gold-bearing,’ and then, making a little detour, visited the famous ruins of Zimbabwe.

‘ Dr. Jameson and I,’ says de Waal, ‘ climbed up the massive but elegantly-built walls, which at some parts are between twenty-five and thirty feet high. We were much interested in the Phallus or Phalli, the Phoenician god, the top part of which had fallen in. Inside the temple there grew a large, wild tree, the branches of which bowed about thirty feet over the walls,’

That night they slept under the shadow of the walls. De Waal agrees with Mauch that they 'had been erected either by the order of King Solomon or of the Queen of Sheba or else by the Persians,' and might have been 'the Ophir of which we read in the Bible.' Nor would the present writer desire to disturb an opinion so pleasing to the fancy, albeit so ill-supported by anything in the nature of evidence.

Then the travellers visited the gold-workings round Victoria, and the kraal of the Chibe of Banyailand—destroyed a year afterwards by Lobengula. Near there 'we enjoyed a fine supper and spent our last night with Mr. Selous, Dr. Jameson, and Mr. Brabant in a very pleasant way. At three the following morning we bade these gentlemen God-speed and again took up the journey.'

It is pleasant to dwell on these happy times in the open veld, with rifle and wagon, under the sun and under the stars, with Tony to make coffee and cook the eggs and the venison, and Rhodes and Jameson perpetually chaffing each other after the manner of English schoolboys.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A PACKET OF LETTERS

' . . . more than kisses, letters mingle souls,  
For thus friends absent speak.'

DONNE.

THROUGHOUT the latter half of the year 1891 and the whole of the year 1892 Jameson was hard at work in Mashonaland. He was the Administrator of a country so large that none could say what its boundaries were—the Plateau of the Interior, as Rhodes called it, or, as he also called it, with a northward thrust of his arm, the North. Jameson, *the* Doctor of Kimberley, had been roped in as its Administrator, as Rhodes roped in all his friends and associates, one for this job, and one for that. And now we shall see the Doctor at work, with wonderful energy and an affectation of cynicism. It is for him, so he says, 'a gamble,' an amusing alternative to 'pills,' to which he can always return if it 'busts.' Yet he works as if he were in earnest. He has promised Rhodes to reduce the expenditure from £250,000 a year to £3000 a month, and he is better than his word, for he actually brings it down to £30,000 a year.

It is not an agreeable task ; but he has so much humour, sympathy, and what may be called natural justice that he carries his reforms through with the goodwill of the settlers.

Those early pioneers who still live—and they are

not very many—will tell you with a certain rueful appreciation how he cajoled and fooled them. ‘He flirted with men,’ said one of them to the writer, ‘like a woman; he fooled us and then laughed at us.’ And his laughter was so infectious that they usually joined.

As for example, one of his chief economies was to reduce the expensive force of police from 700 to 40, and to substitute a militia which cost about £4 per head per annum. To this new burden he reconciled the settlers by promising them horses. But, as it happened, what with lack of money and the horse-sickness then spreading through the country, he could not fulfil his plodge, and an indignation meeting was accordingly organised in Salisbury by men who took a solemn oath among themselves that they were no longer to be put off with chaff. The Doctor entered the hall in an atmosphere of sullen gloom. ‘Gentlemen,’ he began, ‘this is a dull meeting. Barman! Drinks for the company!’ And then—the tension somewhat relaxed—‘Gentlemen of the Salisbury Horse’—there being at that time only one horse to the whole corps—‘I have important news for you’—the meeting pricked up its ears—‘it may seem somewhat premature; but as we are all here, and you have done so well, I think I may let you into the secret. Gentlemen, I heard this morning’—a pause here—‘that your Bandmaster has crossed the Tuli.’

The announcement was made with so much *éclat* and was received with so much acclamation, and the fun became so fast and furious, that it was only next day that the pioneers found the leisure soberly to reflect on the circumstance that they had heard not a word about the horses.

We find another illustration of this indomitable cheerfulness in the reminiscences of his friend 'Bob' Williams.

'I well remember,' says the mining-engineer, 'meeting him in 1892 at Fort Salisbury, on my second journey there. After a long and weary trek, I surprised him in his hut. "Good heavens, Williams," he said, "what the devil do you want here? Didn't I tell you to clear out of Africa altogether."'

'“No use, Doctor,” I replied. “Africa has laid hold of me.”

'“Well, all right,” said Jameson, “you can have my bed or a shakedown.”

'It was the wet season, and the rain, which seldom stopped, came through the wattle and daub hut. The Doctor was ill with fever and other complications, and almost nightly I would wake up to find him either shifting his bed to escape the raindrops or injecting morphia into his arm to get sleep. When I asked him if I could do anything for him he would always reply, “No, I am all right, thanks. Sorry I disturbed you.”'

We are further helped to an understanding of the Doctor's life and temper in those early days by the collection of letters fortunately preserved in the Jameson family, letters characteristic in a certain ironic dryness of statement. As the fine subtle essence of personality clings more to private letters than public events, we may pause a little in our story to dip into the more intimate relations and minor occurrences with which they are mainly concerned.

Middleton Jameson was staying at Fort Salisbury as his brother's guest from the time of Rhodes's



visit in October 1891 until the latter part of 1892. We have many glimpses of Midge—riding with Jameson, hunting with Selous, painting, or making up his mind to paint—‘an extraordinary devil,’ as the Doctor calls him—a genius, as we gather from his surviving works, but incurably indolent, and ‘dithering.’ There is, by the way, one long letter from Midge, an undated letter, but evidently written towards the end of 1891, to ‘Lizzie’—Tom’s wife—from Fort Salisbury.

He had, he says, first seen Lanner with Rhodes, and then gone to spend a month in the bush about forty miles off, to shoot with the Secretary of the Company [Dr. Rutherford Harris] and the lawyer [Caldicott]. They had had a capital time and good shooting; but Harris had been bitten by a crocodile:—

‘We had all been bathing for a fortnight or more in a small shallow pool of water which we had at first carefully examined and thought perfectly safe. Harris went down for his dip without waiting for Caldicott and myself, and although in less than two feet of water the crocodile came up on the rock he was sitting on and got his teeth into his back—fortunately he was not three feet from the shore so he got out and called for help—then the doctor was sent for from Salisbury and we got him in here in my wagon. He has already been lying twelve days on his stomach, and Lanner says he will have another fortnight of it. It was lucky that the animal was not able to get a good grip, otherwise we should have had a funeral.’

Then Midge goes on to speak of his brother:—

‘It is really extraordinary his popularity here, especially as the Company with Rhodes and [my crocodile friend] Harris have come in for a good deal of criticism, not to give it a stronger name. Many of the Company’s laws and mining regulations are much disliked, but somehow or other Lanner

has a way of talking them over and getting the malcontents to agree with him.'

After describing his brother's position, he gives a piece of ominous news:—

'This morning Lanner is doing his first bit of magistrate's work, as he has had to send out the local magistrate to a place called Lomagundi where the chief and some of his people have been killed by the Matabele.'

Then there was Bob—the wanderer, the gold prospector. In his youth he had sailed to the Antipodes and been wrecked upon the coast of Australia—had spent four years in the Bush among black boys and kangaroos and had—it is charitable to suppose—been touched by the sun. He had been a gold-miner in California. He had made sheep-dip in Oregon. He had been a digger at Pilgrim's Rest in the early days of the Transvaal and spent his savings royally in Durban, and he was now upon the lees of life. 'Bob rather takes the place of a drunken wife to me,' the Doctor writes to Sam, 'rather hard as I have never gone in for the luxury of the married state.'

On December 16, 1891, the Doctor writes to Sam of a trip upon which Midge has gone with Rolker to the Lomagundi region:—

'... and as they are to visit the Sinoia Caves . . . I hope Midge will do some painting. I see he still requires a "motive" for painting as Sidney Harsant used to say. However, I daresay he will do something, and in any case he is a delightful companion and a great boon to me. I had expected to do all these trips with Midge, but with Harris's accident, etc., I must remain at Salisbury for the next few months. It is just as well it has happened so—as now I have taken all the detail into my hands and intend to keep

it. Colleagues here all very nice and we get on swimmingly. Am going in for fairly heavy expense in the way of public buildings, etc., but it is a long way to be reprimanded and then the buildings will be well on and not to be stopped. I especially want to show that the country need not stand still during the rainy season—that gold work can go on as usual—even buildings be put up and all the ordinary everyday work. . . . We have had our slap in the face and from now you will see a steady upward progress—though slow. . . .’

Jameson went travelling nevertheless, as we gather from a letter to Sam dated February 8, 1892 :—

‘I returned to Manica after a fairly good trip—rather wet but was well satisfied with the working going on. Midge intended writing, but being naturally lazy and having a slight touch of fever he deputes me. . . . It is all his own fault, as during my fortnight’s absence he returned to his natural lazy habits, stopped riding, and only lounged, just like our police force of last year sitting waiting to get fever. I am glad I did not take him to Manica as it was a pretty hard-riding trip, swimming rivers, etc., not on the road to Manica, which is very good ; but afterwards, riding along the gold belt to the Sabi. . . . We are getting along all right during the wet season—brick-making, building, etc., without interruption. The economy necessary makes things a little difficult, also the constant bickerings amongst the whites, especially our own employees. However, all that will improve with time. It is a fine lesson in human nature and lowers your idea of the same—every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost. I am glad to hear Rhodes is going home. I feel sure he will then get our railway commenced ; without it we might as well shut up shop. . . .’

A letter to Sam on February 15 reports that—

‘. . . Midge is all right again but too lazy to write. . . . He makes a very bad patient, not accustomed to be ill or to have troubles of any kind, I suppose . . . Harris also on

his legs and I hope soon will be off to Manica. Telegraph line arrived here, but some hitch which will prevent communication for a few days. A good deal of worry just at present not diminished by the telegraph being so near;<sup>1</sup> but that will all come right if only the miserable people would show a little more energy on the gold prospecting or rather producing as there are now four mills at work. This would stop the continual financial worries which is the hardest part of the whole business. A fine training tho' for me. If I had only gone through it before the Kimberley days I might have been a rich man to-day. We are having lovely weather for the last week; no rain and no sign of it and Salisbury and Umtali very healthy—though of course a little fever in the lower districts. Nobody who is hard at work seems to get fever—either black or white—the lazy devils who sit waiting for it do,' etc.

A letter of March 7 tells Sam that 'that lazy devil Midge . . . is actually doing a little painting at last, under more or less pressure, but I suppose his surroundings are not very conducive to the "motive" required.' And then: 'What rubbish you write about want of appreciation in reports, etc. Now please try to forget this kind of thing. Even talking to your friends in that kind of way tells back on me, and you know how I hate it. But for the financial question things are going very well, and I like the continuous occupation; but it is pretty hard lines to come into pretty well empty coffers, and still try to make a decent show.' And the letter ends with a lamentation over the continued deplorable behaviour of Bob in Johannesburg, accounts of which had come through from Blanche.

<sup>1</sup> 'On February 17, 1892, the telegraph line to Fort Salisbury was completed and Rhodes and I had a long and interesting talk over the wires with Dr. Jameson, the Administrator, a talk which resulted in the establishment of the first bank in Rhodesia on July 30.'—*Michell's Life of Rhodes*, vol. ii. p. 52.

By April 27 Midge has 'really commenced a picture of a Mashona group, and will not leave until the end of July.' As for his own position, 'Charters so far certainly have not increased my capital; but I am not sorry I went in—it has given me great amusement and kept me employed—and at the worst, if the show is to bust, which I don't expect, I always have pills to fall back on. I think the railway is all right for this season, and then we will swim again, though slowly.'

On May 4:—

'Midge as usual is supposed to write; but I don't suppose it will come off. He is the most extraordinary devil; wonderful energy in beginning things and in small fads, but no persistence. . . . I suppose, however, that kind of thing is a disease in some people and they are hardly to be blamed for it. He is in rude health—rode to the Mazoe and back with me last Saturday and Sunday—seventy miles without even a change. We are having lovely weather and a good many parties returning to the low country to continue work on their claims. I am getting some knocks *re* late summary treatment of the impertinent natives; but it was necessary, and expecting a snubbing from the higher quarters I took all necessary precautions to have a good explanation. Of course Iverson has to protect himself with the home people, so the strictures don't bother me, and on the whole he has been very nice. Rhodes's return will keep all that kind of thing straight. The railway news cheered up the community. I had to talk to them and stand free drinks on the occasion, the latter an expensive but useful form of helping to keep things going pending some money coming in. . . . If the financial question did not exist I should be having quite a decent time of it. But that does bother—constantly some unexpected addition to my hard and fast estimates and to be made up by some corresponding reduction, not always easy to do. However, the Company cannot help it. They simply have not the money. . . .'

'The late summary treatment of the impertinent natives' was no doubt the punishment meted out to the two chiefs, Golodaima and N'Gomo. The narratives of the early explorers of what used to be called Zambesia show very clearly that some of the chiefs were brigands who murdered white traders and hunters for their guns and stores. After the Salisbury settlement these practices continued, and Jameson determined to suppress them. The first case was the murder of one Guerold, a Frenchman, at Wahtas Hill in the Mazoe District on January 22, 1892. Captain Graham, the Commissioner of Police, with a tiny force of eight men under Captain Lendy, and a Maxim gun, went to investigate, and they found the dead man's body and proofs of the murder near a nest of fortified kraals among the hills. One of the chiefs of these kraals, Chirumziba, was captured, and some of Guerold's effects were found in his huts. Chirumziba was therefore imprisoned and his kraal burnt. Then the party surrounded Golodaima's kraal and were met by shots: they fired and killed six and wounded three. When the kraal was searched an 'enormous quantity of stolen property,' including 'almost every conceivable article commonly used by white men,' showed what sort of people Golodaima and his followers were. In the second case a farmer of the Victoria District called Bennett was assaulted and robbed by a chief called N'Gomo, who by all accounts was a nuisance not only to the white men, but to the surrounding natives. N'Gomo defied all attempts to bring him to justice. Captain Lendy then made a night march, surrounded the kraal, and in a short fight killed twenty-one of its inhabitants, whereupon Maguende, N'Gomo's superior chief, presented Lendy with an elephant's tusk for ridding the country of an evil-doer.

When reports of these doings got to England, the Mrs. Jellybys of the day got up an agitation, and Lord Knutsford, who was then Colonial Secretary, was moved to rebuke the Administrator. But the judicious mind will fairly consider that the Mashonaland settlement was a tiny garrison of less than a thousand men in the midst of a million savages. If Jameson had been mild in these cases, the fashion of robbing the white man would have spread, and every settler in Mashonaland would speedily have had his throat cut.<sup>1</sup>

Jameson's reference to Cecil Rhodes and the Beira railway also requires a word of explanation. Rhodes arrived at Kimberley on November 23, 1891, after visiting Tuli, the base camp at Macloutsi, and the Chief Khama at Palapyo. He had made a journey of 4000 miles by sea and land and seen the North of his heart. And now in the interval between the beginning of the year and the beginning of the session he paid a flying visit to England, his main business being to get the Beira railway through.

We hear something of its results in Rhodes's speech at the second meeting of the Chartered Company.<sup>2</sup>

'A reference to the map,' he said, 'will show that it was essential to make a communication from the East coast—in fact to get a railway built. We have had great difficulty over this railway. We ought to have built it much sooner; but the Home Government, or rather the Foreign Office, has glided into that steady, pleasant duty of the exchange of letters, and they appear to think that this might last until the end of the century. Unfortunately some of our younger spirits went up and forced the route from Beira, and then

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<sup>1</sup> A full account of these affairs and the resulting correspondence is given in the Blue Book C. 7171 (1893).

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches*, p. 304.

we had the unfortunate dispute with the Portuguese, which, however, did bring about a happy result. We got some final settlement of the question as to whether we could, or could not, build a railway—not only the general terms, but that the line should be completed within some date. The result was that we found we had to build the railway by arrangement with a company which the Portuguese had created.

‘When I returned home about five months ago, when the Charter was at its worst, and our shares stood at 10s. or 12s., it seemed almost impossible to obtain any further capital; but through the good feeling of friends I obtained sufficient to build the railway from the coast.’<sup>1</sup>

On August 11, 1892, Jameson wrote to Sam:—

‘Midge and Selous left yesterday for a six weeks’ shoot on the Pungwe. Selous then goes home and Midge goes up the East coast to Egypt, arriving there in November for a six months’ paint, and then home. Before leaving he finished a picture of a group of Kafirs working iron—also made a lot of sketches of individual niggers. . . . I am sorry to lose him, and he was a great favourite amongst my crowd here; but I think he had had enough of the wilds. Poor Bob is still in Umtali Hospital and Midge is to do his best to persuade him to go home. [Here follows a discussion of Bob’s case with which the reader need not be troubled]. I shan’t get home this year, and in fact I don’t know when. Things are going better but finance still a great bother, as the better we go naturally the more we need to spend, and our revenue is not very expansive, and the available cash outside very limited indeed. Harris<sup>2</sup> means well in Cape Town, but is really a muddling ass—on the surface a genius but under the crust as thick as they are made.

‘I hope Willoughby’s battery will be a good one. It is

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<sup>1</sup> The date of this speech is November 29, 1892. The railway had only reached its seventy-fifth milestone by the autumn of 1893. The Portuguese, the tsetse-fly, and the malarial mosquito were a powerful combination.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, Dr. Rutherford Harris.



very plucky of him to get it as I am afraid he will have to pay most of it out of his own pocket—and he has not too much at present like the rest of us. That —— <sup>1</sup> must be a damned scoundrel who sold the Lobengula Battery. It costs me a lot in “reims” <sup>2</sup> to keep it together. Hoste tells me that the fitter I sent to put it right and work it recognises pieces of lots of engines at the Rand, and they must have stolen them from many places and put them together to make an engine—Hoste’s joke of course. . . . We are in our new offices now and feel quite comfortable and important. This damned railway still hangs, and I suppose any hour may bring us the information that Pauling has got it and may finish through the fly by the end of the year. Even then all this delay upsets my calculations as expecting it to be an accomplished fact long ago and by this time an increased population resulting with an increased revenue—I shan’t get the benefit of it till next year.

‘Gladstone’s majority not as satisfactory as it might be. I suppose no Minister was ever in a more difficult position, and Home Rule even now very dicky. . . . We are gradually getting a small crowd of women now, and they have already begun to fight amongst themselves which sounds rather civilised—the Caldicotts very nice. . . . Just received a wire from Rhodes to say that Pauling’s contract signed to be thro’ the fly by December 31, a great relief.’

To this letter a long postscript dated August 15 gives Sam the latest news of Bob—now in hospital at Umtali and Bob’s debts, for Bob had an amiable way of drawing on his brother for the expenses of a promising but illusive reef :—

<sup>1</sup> Jameson’s abuse is not to be taken literally. He had a playful habit of calling even the most exemplary of his friends ‘damned scoundrels,’ and the author has therefore taken the liberty of omitting the name of the Rand magnate who sold the battery.

<sup>2</sup> Reims, i.e. leather thongs much used by the Dutch for harness. The Rhodesian gold-miners had to buy old stamp batteries from the Rand, owing to the difficulty and expense of getting new ones from England.

' . . . Have two more drafts of his from Umtali to-day to meet. As you may suppose, I spend more in the country than I receive in salary, and for some of Master Bob's drafts and other things have already lately had to sell some of my very small nest-egg outside of Charter shares which I keep for a rainy day, which is pretty sure to come to me with my financial luck. However, I need not go on grunting to you about Bob—only just at this moment I feel a little irritated, although I know the poor devil is not responsible for his actions. . . . Company's finance is still hell and Harris is a damned nuisance.'

On October 11, 1892, the Doctor wrote two letters, one to Midge and the other to Sam. In the first he says :—

'Have just returned from a trip round Hartley Hill, Lomagundi, etc. Williams and Willoughby went with me and are still out hunting. I had to come back to talk to Rhodes before he left for England last week. We had a good lion chase. I got one bullet in and Willoughby finished it off. A decent male. We also got several buffalo and plenty of buck of all sorts. Hope you had as good sport on the Pungwo. I have to go down to Manica to try a white man who is supposed to have murdered a nigger, then after that must limit myself to Salisbury for the wet season as Duncan goes home next month to bring his wife out after the rains.<sup>1</sup> Our buildings are all completed and many private ones gone up, so you would scarcely know Salisbury. Harris sailed Bob off to England. . . . I may get home next year and may not. I am going to see it out till we are a success. Our gold prospects have made big jumps since you left, and I think we will see next year with the railway and gold. Finance still worries my soul out. Expect to spend most of the wet season in my office and hut with my books.'

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Henry Farrell Duncan, Surveyor-General, was a retired officer of the Royal Navy, and before joining the Company's service in 1891 had been for some time engaged in survey work in British Bechuanaland. On one or two occasions he acted as Administrator in the absence of Jameson.

The letter to Sam is also sanguine about the gold, and hopes that 'Rhodes's speech at the meeting in November will also give us a leg up. . . . I feel sure he will get some more money for telegraph and railway' and 'Mazoe is turning out trumps.' He mourns the loss of Duncan, Willoughby, and Williams 'my only chums,' who are going to England—to return in May.

The Manica murder trial to which Dr. Jameson briefly refers in his letter to Midge is still remembered in Rhodesia. A drunken bar-keeper, irritated by tom-tom playing, had fired into the darkness of the surrounding night and by ill-luck had killed a Mashona boy. He was found guilty of manslaughter, and Jameson as Chief Magistrate sentenced him to a fine of £50 or a term of imprisonment. As there was no gaol, the Doctor was for a moment embarrassed when the prisoner said he could not pay the fine. But only for a moment.

'What can you do then?' he asked the prisoner.

'Well, Doctor,' the bar-keeper replied, 'I could scrape up £25 and give you my I.O.U. for the rest.'

'That will do,' Jameson replied. 'Clerk of the Court, take the prisoner's money and his note of hand for the balance.'

Midge was at this time on his way to Beira with Selous, shooting as they went, and we hear on November 1 that 'poor Midge has had a nasty gun accident, my .577 express burst in his hand; but both he and Selous write that they think that the hand will be all right.' Midge thereupon changes his mind and goes by way of East London to Johannesburg, and we have a letter from Lanner telling Sam to put a pin into him 'as he is an awful chap to dither.' On November 14 Lanner writes gleefully

that 'Rhodes is making them hum at home, and is not finished yet. His biggest scheme of all, I see, is not yet alluded to. [Possibly the Cape to Cairo railway?] . . . I would buy Charters again but Hillier keeps my account pretty tight and curses me for already spending a good deal more than my income. He is a good caretaker and saves me money. Bob Williams is here booming us all on the gold question. An optimist is really a very pleasant companion for a little time after you have had a year's dose of pessimists.'

A letter of November 21 reports cheerfully :—

'I come out fairly square in my estimates to the end of the year, and expect that the finances for the ensuing year will be all right. Altogether better than I expected, and everything in the future looks bright enough—though the next five months will be a bit dull.'

The next letter, dated January 22, 1893, is so characteristically Jamesonian that it must be given at length :—

'Would that we could see ourselves as other see us. Your sublime confidence in the scrip overdraft trick is rather alarming to me, coming with your very sound advice to me to get on velvet in Charters, and at the same time telling me you have seven shares costing you £700 and had refused to sell one for £600. Remember I have fair grounds for giving advice, having on two separate occasions in the past left myself completely stony, and may very probably do it a third time, tho' I hope not. The difference between us is that you have several hostages to fortune, while I have deliberately avoided these luxuries, and knowing that I have only myself to look after have felt myself entitled to gamble if I liked. This appears rather a serious lecture for a youngster to a senior and I know it will do no good, but

looked as if the Doctor might be killed as well—one man swinging an axe told him to get out of the way or take the consequences. But Jameson stood firm. He first appealed to the British sense of justice and love of order; but failing there he appealed to interest. The country, he said, was upon the eve of a boom. The magic word was well calculated to catch the ear of a Mashonaland crowd: when the boom came, the Doctor continued, the pioneers would reap their reward. But if lynch law prevailed confidence in the country would be destroyed and the boom would never come at all.

The appeal had a chastening effect on the crowd, and Jameson, quick to seize an advantage, called them fools; Jim was going to be hanged—of that he could assure them. Then why all this fuss about it?

The crowd dispersed without doing any mischief, and the Administrator went back to his hand of loo.

In a letter of March 6, 1893, there is a note on Rhodes which takes us back to Colonial politics:—

‘Rhodes has had a pretty hard time of it in London and I think will have his hands full with his Cabinet out here. Sivewright seems to have made a bit of a mess.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sir James Sivewright, the Commissioner for Railways in Rhodes's Government, had gone to London with Rhodes at the beginning of October 1892 after concluding a railway refreshment contract with an ill-favoured friend of his, a drunken and unscrupulous Scot called James Logan, who—to do him justice—was also a man of enterprise and energy. Sivewright had given Logan the contract upon terms which did not please some of his colleagues. These colleagues cabled and wrote to Rhodes and Sivewright demanding that the contract be suspended, and in the absence of Rhodes and Sivewright they repudiated the contract. Rhodes, returning by the East coast, Delagoa Bay, and the Transvaal, arrived in Cape Town on March 8, 1893. The protesting Ministers then placed a pistol at the head of the Prime Minister: either Sivewright must go or they would resign. Rhodes was never a man to be coerced. He resigned himself and reconstituted his Ministry without Sivewright upon the one side or Rose Innes, Merriman, and Sauer upon the other.

On March 27, 1893, Jameson wrote buoyantly to Sam :—

‘ You are an easily dejected crowd in your golden city, to write such a dumpy letter of prospects because you had a few days’ rain and a railway accident. Plenty of news every day of new people and batteries coming up here ; but we have another couple of months of patience to exercise before feeling the good effects.

‘ . . . Bezuidenhout wants the partnership to take the whole coach line from Pretoria to end of railway at Chimoio. I am trying to get Harris to arrange it, as running the Umtali post ourselves is a horrid bother and I feel sure more expensive than the contract could be given for. Our gold is flourishing. New Salisbury District, as far as surface goes, beats Victoria, and the first shaft of 42 feet gives samples which I have seen panned this morning—phenomenal. Of course mine work must be done to generalise ; but it promises wonderfully well.’

Again, on April 10, Jameson writes :—

‘ I have still to keep a fair-sized pauper community and will till some of these working capitals come in. Everything is going well ; but I am rather in the blues, as on the top of rather a beastly mail to answer, poor Dan died this morning after a week’s illness. He was a most faithful creature and the best servant I ever had—a friend of everybody up here and could do anything. Besides servant he has been my driver in all my journeys through the country. . . . Blanche’s scandal letter most acceptable. Ask her to repeat it as often as she has time. I know it is no trouble to her to write and they give me a lot of amusement. So tell her to be charitable. . . . ’

A letter of April 24 is much in the same tone :—

‘ . . . people and money coming into the country—everything looks very hopeful—just got another 250 oz. of gold this morning from Willoughby and Dickens—also some from

Umtali.' Takes a milder view of Willoughby's battery 'but still as that little devil Willoughby is a particular amateur, and will want all sorts of explanations when he comes out, I think it is as well you should go for —— and Co. if they are in fault. Another murder here of a white by a white this morning. A kind of epidemic. I shall have to keep the scaffold standing as a permanent institution if this goes on. However, I suppose epidemics of that kind do occur. Home Rule success splendid! . . . Look out for your lungs this winter.'

In a new and wild country like Rhodesia—with gaols yet unbuilt, a tiny police force, and illimitable refuges in the interior—there was, in fact, no small danger of lawlessness. Therefore Jameson pushed on the building of gaols; but his chief difficulty was to get a hangman. At last by the offer of a large reward he secured the shamefaced services of a settler down on his luck.

The hangman did his job to the satisfaction of the authorities, but was sent to Coventry by his old comrades. No one would speak to him; what was worse, no one would drink with him. When he entered a bar, the bar would empty, and his pathetic offers of a drink resounded in the ensuing silence. Once—it was in Salisbury—only a drouthy tailor remained in the saloon, too far gone in liquor to move.

'Have a drink,' said the hangman coaxingly, 'just a little drop!'

The tailor looked at him stonily. 'Don't like your little drops,' he said at last, and staggered to the door.

A letter of May 5 is chiefly concerned with the price of deals and iron with which Sam has furnished him, with which he 'has been able to knock the

gentlemen here down,' though 'you will understand that I am bound to encourage the merchants here if I can. . . .' Moreover 'as the foundations of the gaol are already being put in and I leave for Umtali on Saturday to start the buildings there, it would have been very awkward to stop building till the stuff would come from Johannesburg. I am specially anxious to start the buildings to make as good a show as possible for people coming in, and so make a better success of our stand sale. . . . The flotation trick seems to be going on well at home. Both Willoughby and Bob Williams very successful. Our Salisbury district doing better every day. . . . Altogether we are going to have a fairly successful year I think.' 'I have old Alfred staying with me . . . a nice old lady but not a genius . . . the true expert class who does not like committing himself to any opinion unless he can damn. Cape politics very interesting at present. S. must be rather a bother to Rhodes; but I don't think the latter will object to having an opportunity of reconstructing his Cabinet. A letter from Midge last mail saying he was on his way up the Nile—had done no painting so far but very enthusiastic about Egypt.'

On May 29 there is a note on the progress of communications: '. . . we have got Ziederberg to take on the Salisbury extension from August 8, and by that time I will make Bezuidenhout or some one else put mules on the Umtali line; so we will have a rapid service from both ends, which ought to help us in the way of visitors.'

Then more talk of shares. 'The Australian smash a nasty one for us just at present, but that will only be temporary. The end of this year ought to see



us in a fairly good position—bar further accidents. Duncan will be here in a fortnight and then I shall begin my rounds. This will wake me up as I feel getting a bit stale after about eight months' continuous office and financial worries which I hate.'

Jameson always dearly loved gossip: he was never happier than when chuckling over some little scandal about one or other of his friends or enemies, and on June 29, 1893, he writes a grateful letter to Blanche for providing him with his favourite entertainment:—

'Sorry to hear you are having ructions with the brilliant Beetles (Bettelheim). The Rand must be a funny place and Mrs. — a plucky young woman; but I think the attractions of the serai will be too much for the sex of Johannesburg to keep up the cutting business. . . . Glad to hear you say Sam is such a swell in the Director line, and I hear from others that he is making money hand over fist. You will be able to do the swell in Hyde Park while I shall probably be drivelling on in the wilds. . . .'

Still Mashonaland is getting 'a bit more lively,' although 'I don't see any immediate prospect of a trip home.' When it does come he will go by the East coast to 'the Continent and as little of England as possible. Meantime for the next few months I shall get plenty of mule driving which I don't enjoy at all, and for nearer distances long rides which are still less amusing. Rhodes's politics very amusing; but he sails through his troubles beautifully, and I hope to see him up here before the end of the year.'

Here, no doubt, because of his rounds—his mule-cart driving and his long rides, which he did not

enjoy at all, but which ran into thousands of miles—there is a gap in the correspondence of which we may take advantage to bring this chapter to an end. The next will open on more stirring times.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A TRIAL OF STRENGTH

'When God was portioning out fear to all the people in the world at last it came to my turn, and there was no fear left to give me.'  
—GENERAL GORDON.

#### I

FOR more than two years the pioneers lived at peace with their neighbours the Matabele. 'We are on the most friendly terms with Lobengula,' Rhodes said at this time. 'He receives a globular sum of £100 a month in sovereigns, and he looks forward with great satisfaction to the day of the month when he will receive them. I have not the least fear of any trouble in the future from Lobengula.'<sup>1</sup>

Yet there were difficulties upon both sides. The Matabele had always lived by 'eating up' the tribes around them, and had always looked upon the Mashona as their slaves, and their cattle. Their custom was to send armed parties of tax-collectors to every tributary chief. These parties demanded what they thought the chief was able to pay in grain and cattle. If the chief resisted swift messages were sent to all the other tax-collectors at all the other kraals; they combined and descended together upon the chief who resisted, destroyed his village, and killed him and his people except such of his young men and maidens as they deemed fit to take away. Moreover—after the ancient Irish fashion—

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, p. 303 (November 29, 1892).

the tributary Mashona were made to give pasturage to herds of the royal cattle, and if these cattle were stolen, an impi was sent to punish the kraal where the theft had taken place.

In the pursuit of these and other gentle usages the Matabele killed the Chief Lomagundi and his people in 1891, and the Chibe of Banyailand and his people in 1892. Moreover, Matabele impis raided Mashonaland and ravished and murdered under the eyes of the pioneers. Thus, for example, in 1892 a Matabele regiment marched through the camp of the Mashonaland Agency, only fourteen miles from Victoria, where that Company had 150 natives at work, and these wretched people begged for the protection of their white employers. Dr. Jameson protested vigorously upon these various occasions, and Lobengula sometimes apologised and sometimes justified himself. The killing of the Chief Lomagundi he described as a 'mistake,' but as for the marauding impis they were merely collecting arrears of tribute or punishing his serfs according to the custom of the country.

In April 1893 Rhodes's beloved telegraph wire was cut near the kraal of a Mashona chief called Gomalla; 500 yards of the wire were taken away and no trace of it could be found. Dr. Jameson found that Gomalla's people were the thieves, and sent a police officer to the kraal to secure either the culprits or a fine in cattle. Gomalla, being a cunning rascal, paid the fine in cattle which belonged to Lobengula, and then complained to the King that the Company had taken the royal cattle. Lobengula protested to Jameson, and told him that his people wanted to fetch the cattle, but he wished to settle the matter amicably. Jameson sent the cattle

to the King, with explanations, and told him he was wise not to send the impi as 'there would surely have been trouble from the large body of white men now in the country.' And Jameson added: 'When his people come to work, or when they are sent by him, they will always be well received, but aggressive and irresponsible bodies might be severely dealt with.'<sup>1</sup>

We gather what was passing in the King's mind from the reports of the white men then at Buluwayo. Thus Colenbrander reported that the King was 'awfully wild' about the affair. And 'Matabele' Wilson tells the story more graphically.

The King, it appears, turned upon Wilson—whom he liked and trusted—and asked him why Dr. Jameson had taken his cattle.

'I do not know, O King,' Wilson answered discreetly. 'I am not Jameson. He is a big induna.'

'Old Lemachie, thou liest,' said the King; 'tell me the truth.'

Then Wilson explained as best he could that the cattle had been taken until such time as the thieves were produced, for if a man does wrong he must be punished.

The King appeared to ponder over the answer, and some little time afterwards he said to Wilson, 'Go to my *kotlas* and tell me what you see.'

So Wilson went to the King's storehouse and found a vast heap of guns—chiefly the rifles sent by Rhodes three years before—all thrown higgledy-piggledy in heaps and covered with rust.

'What did you see?' asked the King.

'I saw many guns covered with rust,' Wilson replied.

<sup>1</sup> This message was sent from Tuli on May 19, 1893.

Then the King said, 'Make them ready for use, Lemachie.'

And as royal orders were not to be disobeyed in Buluwayo, Wilson called in his friend 'Jimmy' Fairbairn, and got all the *kotla* girls together, and they cleaned the rifles.

Then the King sent for a rifle, and handing it to the induna Ingandan, he said, 'Take an impi and go over to Victoria and get my cattle that my *maholi* (slaves) have stolen.'<sup>1</sup>

It might appear from this incident that Lobengula was a trifle resentful, and desired to display his power to the white man. On the other hand, it appears that at this time the people of Bere's kraal in the Victoria district had been accused of stealing the King's cattle, and Colenbrander, who was then at Buluwayo, reported that the King was perfectly satisfied with the explanation, and was sending the impi both to punish these thieves and those who had cut the wire,

Nevertheless it is certain that Lobengula both armed his men with rifles and sent them into Mashonaland in the face of Jameson's warning. The King first sent a small force of seventy men; but this force did not succeed in its object. Captain Lendy, the Resident Magistrate, met it outside Victoria and sent it back with a letter to the King, reminding him of Jameson's message that his impis must not cross the border.

Then about a month later the King organised a great expedition under Manyow and Umgandan, consisting of the Mhlahlanklela, the No Seika, and

<sup>1</sup> 'Matabele' Wilson, most respected and best beloved of the few remaining pioneers before the Pioneers, still lives near Buluwayo, and the narrative given above was taken, with much more of interesting reminiscence, from his own lips.

the No Lima Regiments, and the men of eight towns; 2500 warriors left Buluwayo and they were attended by about 1000 *maholi*—in all a force of 3500 men.<sup>1</sup>

We gather what happened at the King's kraal before the impi started from a letter written by Colenbrander, then agent of the Imperial Government at Buluwayo, to the Rev. J. D. Moffat, dated June 29, 1893. The small impi, which had been met by Lendy, having failed, the King was now sending a large impi to punish the cattle-thieves ('and I fancy that he will go for the recent wire-cutters also.') Lobengula had asked him to wire and let 'Lendy' know, also Dr. Harris and Dr. Jameson, which he was doing by that post, so that there need be no unnecessary scare. The King in his anxiety to make his intentions clear sent to Colenbrander to write another letter to Lendy; 'but finding him away, they went to Dawson, who kindly wrote for me, thus enabling them to get a good start in front of the impi, warning the Victoriaites of their intentions.'

Either Dawson or Colenbrander was wrong in his date, for Dawson's letter bears the same date as Colenbrander's, whereas it was written the day before:—

'BULUWAYO, June 29, 1893.

'To the Magistrate or other Officer in charge at Victoria.

'SIR,—An impi is at present leaving this neighbourhood for the purpose of punishing some of Lo Bengula's people who have lately raided some of his own cattle. The impi in its progress will probably come across some white men, who are asked to understand that it has nothing whatever

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<sup>1</sup> See Manyow's evidence in the Newton Report, C. 7555, p. 25.

to do with them. They are likewise asked not to oppose the impi in its progress. Also, if the people who have committed the offence have taken refuge among the white men they are asked to give them up for punishment.—Written at Lo Bengula's request by J. W. Dawson.'

If this letter had got to Lendy ahead of the impi, history might have been a little different. But as we shall see, it was not delivered until the mischief was done, and Colenbrander's telegram, which had to be sent by runners to Palapye, was also too late.<sup>1</sup>

Poor Lendy did not live to tell his story before the Commission; but Charles Vigers, the Mining Commissioner, tells what happened.<sup>2</sup> On Sunday July 9 he was riding with Lieutenant Weir of the Police, three miles from Victoria. They were met by a mob of Mashonas, who told them the Matabele were close at hand. They rode on and presently 'saw the whole of the granite kopjes covered with armed Kafirs, and we also saw, on looking right and left across the flat, large numbers of Kafirs with shields and guns already between us and the town. We rode up to a large party of them in charge of an induna, and asked them what they were doing. He said they were hunting Mashonas to kill them for stealing the King's cattle. He also told us that there was a letter from the King with the main body.'

When Vigers and Weir returned they found 200 of the impi already in the township, within 100 yards of the hospital: 'they were armed, they were cheeky

<sup>1</sup> According to Michell, *Life of Rhodes*, Colenbrander's telegram reached Victoria on July 9. According to the *Mashonaland Times* (published at Victoria, July 20, 1893), it reached Lendy on the 8th. It reached Jameson at Salisbury on the 10th, as appears from his long telegram to Dr. Rutherford Harris of that date given in the Blue Book, C. 7171. It is certain that the impi were already inside the Victoria District on the 8th, and were massacring natives in the township of Victoria on the 9th,

<sup>2</sup> C. 7555, p. 18,



and shouted out insulting things.' There was another large body by the church; they had been pursuing the clergyman's house-boy and had stabbed him to death. 'I rode up to them,' says Vigers, 'and got off my horse and went up to a young *majaka* who had a rifle. I snatched it out of his hand and asked him where he got it from. He said the King had given it to him. I then told them that if they came any farther they would be fired on. . . . Captain Lendy with police and mounted inhabitants in the meantime were hunting small parties of the Matabele round about the town, rescuing white men's cattle that were being driven off. The country at that time was completely covered by large parties of Matabele in pursuit of the Makalakas who had taken refuge in the hills.'

It was afterwards found that about four hundred of the natives of the district, men, women, and children, had been slaughtered in this raid. The roads into Victoria were strewn with their bodies. The smoke of the burning kraals went up into the sky at every point of the horizon. And although the Matabele did not kill the white men, they took the cattle from their farms and cut the throats of their fowls and their goats. And they killed their servants before their eyes.

As for example, a prospector called Richmond had been warned, like all the other white people, to take refuge in the town, and was walking along the road with his goods packed on a donkey, which a Mashona boy was leading; some Matabele came towards them, and the boy, seeing death in their faces, ran to his master and clasped him by the knees. The Matabele rushed up, tore the boy away, and stabbed him to death before Richmond's eyes.

Richmond was carrying a rifle, but did not use it. He protested, however, and a Matabele, laying his hand upon his arm, said, 'Keep quiet, O white man, we are forbidden to kill you now, but your day is coming.'

We have said that Jameson was at Salisbury, and only heard of these doings on the 10th. At the same time he got the news from Lendy and Colenbrander's reassuring message from the King. His first impression was that Lendy could turn back the impi without fighting, and he telegraphed back:—

'Have you heard the King's message to me? You will see he is very anxious and in fact frightened of any trouble with the whites. But you have done absolutely right in taking all precautions. What you should do now is this: See the head induna as soon as possible. Tell him of the King's message and my reply, and, if necessary, that you would act up to it with police, volunteers, and your machine guns. At the same time, remember the excessive importance of not hinting at this if avoidable. From a financial point of view it would throw the country back till God knows when. In short, you have authority to use extreme measures if necessary; but I trust to your tact to get rid of the Matabele without any actual collision.'

And at the same time Jameson sent this reply to the King, through Colenbrander:—

'Thank the King for his friendly message, and tell him that, of course, I have nothing to do with his punishing his own maholis. But I must insist that his impi be not allowed to cross the border agreed upon by us. He not being there, they are not under control, and Captain Lendy tells me that some of them have actually been in the streets of Victoria, burning kraals within a few miles, and killing some Mashonas who are servants of the white men. I am now instructing Captain Lendy to see the head induna and

tell him those cattle must all be returned at once. His impi must retire beyond our agreed border ; otherwise he is to take his police and at once expel them, however many there are. The King will see the necessity of this, otherwise it is possible, the white men getting irritated, his expedition may never return to Buluwayo at all.'

Jameson saw that if the impi stayed it must come to war ; but he did not want a fight, and thought that Lendy could get rid of the impi without fighting. So much is clear from these messages.

But this time Lendy could not get rid of the impi. He interviewed indunas, he chased small parties, he ordered them to go, but he did not drive them out. On July 13 Jameson started for Victoria on horseback, and he telegraphed to Lendy, ' Keep the induna till my arrival. Tell him I will give a reply to the King's orders myself.'

On the 14th Captain Lendy went out with the patrol in search of the Matabele leader, and of the letter. After he had gone, about eleven o'clock in the day, the induna Manyow, with about twelve more, came to the outskirts of the town and gave Vigers the fateful letter. Asked why they had not delivered the letter sooner, but had left it till all the damage was done, they excused themselves: ' the boy with the letter had a thorn in his foot.'

All they wanted now was that the King's Mashonas should be given up to them, and they would go away and not trouble the settlers any more. And Manyow added, ' I will not kill them in the town, and dirty the place ; but I will take them into the bush lower down and then have them killed.'

' If you have any charge to make against these

people,' Lendy replied—for by this time he had returned—'I will hear it as a magistrate, and if I find your charges correct I will hand them over to you to be dealt with ; but you must point out to me the men you charge. I will not give up the women and children, as they have not committed any crimes.'

'All these Mashonas are the King's,' said Manyow, 'and he wishes to punish them. When you wanted Kafirs who had committed crimes, the King at once handed those men over to you. Why should not you do the same for the King ?'

Manyow was told that the Mashonas would not be given up to him and he left in anger. Captain Lendy's decision was inspired by a previous message sent to his second-in-command by Jameson :—

'You can give up nothing. On Lendy's arrival the induna can lay his complaint against him as a magistrate.'

## II

The distance from Salisbury to Victoria is 188 miles, and most of that way Jameson rode, with William Napier<sup>1</sup> for company.

But at Moroki, some way to the north of Victoria, he was met by Mr. Bouchier Wrey,<sup>2</sup> with a cart and eight mules. And Wrey tells us that Jameson was at that time suffering so much from his painful

<sup>1</sup> Napier, a Victoria merchant who had been in Salisbury on business. Afterwards senior Captain in Major Wilson's Victoria Column.

<sup>2</sup> Then consulting engineer of the Mashonaland Agency, now Sir Philip Bouchier Wrey (of an old Devonshire family and eleventh Baronet of his line).

malady of piles that he could not sit in the cart, but could only lean against the back of the seat in a half upright position. Wrey thought of Jameson's ride of 150 miles on horseback, and silently marvelled at his pluck.

As they drove through the Victoria District Jameson could see for himself the state of affairs. He saw Mashona kraals burning on both sides of the road, and Matabele, armed with shield and assegai, and laden with plunder, crossed the road in front of the mules.<sup>1</sup> Both Jameson and Napier describe a little incident which may be given in Napier's words:—

'We had outspanned our cart, and saw a rush of Mashonas to the kopjes. They had previously been talking to us. They shouted that the Matabeles were coming. The Mashonas saw the Matabeles coming  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles off, and took refuge in the rocks. They were in hopes that the Matabeles would not attack them, as they had left one of their prettiest girls on the rocks with a calabash of food.'

Fortunately the Matabele did not notice this black Andromeda sitting on her rock and passed on without attacking the kraal.

Jameson arrived at Victoria on July 17. By that time the whole white population of the district and many of the Mashonas as well were either in the fort or in laager beside it. The wagons of the farmers were drawn up in a hollow square under the south wall of the fort. This fort was not the fortified camp put up by the pioneers near the head of Providential Pass, but a new fort to guard the town of Victoria—a large square building with four square flanking towers, one at each corner, stables for the

<sup>1</sup> Jameson's evidence before Newton, C. 7555, p. 19.

horses of the police round the inside walls, and a gateway facing the north.<sup>1</sup> It was surrounded by barbed-wire entanglements, and two Maxims and a Gatling were mounted on the towers. All work was at a standstill. The white men of the settlement, to the number of about 400, had been armed, and most of them were organised in two forces, the Victoria Rangers, commanded by Lord Henry Paulet, afterwards Marquess of Winchester, and the Victoria Burghers, under Commandant Judd. There were besides seven police—all the regular garrison that Jameson's economies had left in Victoria. Of horses in camp there were only 82; and of these only 50 were fit for cavalry work.

Such was the state of the fort and town of Victoria when Dr. Jameson arrived. As to the feeling of its inhabitants, it may be gathered from the *Mashonaland Times*. Its notes for the week describe the 'Rev. Sylvester' (whose servant had been assegai'd) preaching from an ammunition case on Sunday (the 16th) 'that the sons of Ham would all be cleared out,' and it reports a public meeting on Saturday, the 15th, in the Market Square 'called to ask Dr. Jameson (who had not yet arrived) what protection farmers, prospectors, traders, and others might expect from the Company.' The burden of the speeches was that Victoria could stand these incursions and massacres no longer and that 'Dr. Jameson must settle the Matabele question at once, now and for ever.'

On July 18 the indunas, Manyow and Umgandan and the rest, answered the Doctor's summons. It was about noon when they came, and before they arrived Jameson had telegraphed to the High Com-

<sup>1</sup> Of this fort only part of the walls remain; but one of the flanking towers has been preserved and is now used as a belfry.

missioner: 'The indunas have failed to appear; probably frightened. Kraal-burning still going on, which means more killing of women and children, so I am now sending out a mounted party to get rid of the impi. I feel sure they will retreat across the border and it will only be a local matter.' But he was wrong.

They came up towards the fort armed, with two or three hundred men; but only the indunas were allowed to approach, and then only after they had laid down their weapons. Jameson sat on a chair before the gate of the fort with a group of his officers behind him. Napier interpreted; Brabant, the native commissioner, who also knew Matabele well, stood by, and we have from these and several other witnesses, including the induna Manyow, a full account of what passed.

The Doctor by all accounts was very short with them, and by all accounts also Umgandan was truculent and threatening.

'What do you mean,' Jameson asked, 'by coming here and doing what you have done?'

'I was sent by the King,' Manyow replied, 'to punish the Mashonas for stealing the King's cattle.'

There was some little debate about the King's orders and about the border, in the course of which Jameson told Manyow that he lied. The young induna, Umgandan, broke in, but Jameson said he spoke not with boys but with men. He then asked Manyow if it were not true that he had no control over his young men.

'Yes,' said Manyow.

'Very well then,' said the Doctor, 'you go with the older men, and I will deal with the younger men who do not go.' And Jameson pointed at the guns and his men behind them on the wall.

There was afterwards some dispute about the length of time Jameson gave Manyow to get over the border. But, according to all the witnesses, Jameson gave Manyow 'an hour' or 'an hour and a half' or 'a short time,' *not* to cross the border, which was about thirty miles away, but to start.<sup>1</sup> The truth is that the Matabele have no time, but only the sun. The *indaba* took place at noon, and Napier pointed to where the sun would be an hour or two later.

When we remember that unmounted men could not reach those swift-footed warriors, and that Jameson had at the most only fifty men he could mount, then we begin to realise what chances Jameson was taking. He spoke to these indunas not as a man might be expected to speak who could send out fifty against three thousand, but as one who commanded the situation. According to Manyow, 'When Dr. Jameson had finished, he said, "Now go, or I will drive you across."'

Manyow got up and went; but Umgandan said, 'Very well, we will be driven across.'

They all felt the threat of Umgandan's attitude, and Brabant, for one, fully expected an attack on the Victoria laager that night, for he heard Umgandan saying, as he was walking away from the Doctor, 'We must collect all our men, and drive the white men out of this.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'That is absolutely false. Any such order, apart from the truth of the story, would have been ridiculous.'—Dr. Jameson's evidence. 'The impression I got was, they had an hour to make their preparations to clear. It could never have occurred to any one that they were meant to be over the border in an hour.'—Napier's evidence. Brabant's evidence is to the same effect.

<sup>2</sup> Jameson's own account of the end of the interview agrees with Manyow's: 'Umgandan, the induna of Euxna kraal, sitting next to Manyow, jumped up and said, "Then we will be driven."'



Such was the famous *indaba* of the Victoria Fort. It lasted about twenty minutes, and a painter might reconstruct it from the evidence—the Doctor on his chair before the fort, very stern; the indunas squatting opposite; Manyow deprecatory; the truculent Umgandan with his feathered head-dress, interrupting at every turn; the pioneers crowding the ramparts of the fort craning their necks to hear; a little way off some hundreds of the Matabele watching and waiting, and in the distance little pillars of smoke rising from the burning kraals.<sup>1</sup>

Jameson made up his mind upon the instant. ‘I then told Captain Lendy,’ he said, ‘to get fifty mounted men, or as many up to that number as horses were fit for, and to have them saddled up in about a couple of hours for patrol duty. I then went to lunch and the men also.’

After lunch, according to Sir Philip Wrey, they could still see a crowd of Matabele squatting with their shields and assegais on a granite slope or *idwala*, on the western side of the flats, or commonage as it is called in the evidence, and Jameson said, ‘I am sorry for you fellows, but there is only one thing to do. Out you must go!’

Jameson’s account is a little different :

‘When Captain Lendy had paraded his men about two hours afterwards, I gave him orders as follows : “You have heard what I have told the Matabele ; I want you to carry

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Philip Wrey, who was present, told the writer that when the indunas appeared, the little troop was mounted and set going in an unbroken file out of the gate of the fort, round the wall, and in again. He took this to be a ruse to impress the Matabele. On the other hand, we know that just before the indunas arrived Jameson had ordered out the mounted party, so that Wrey may possibly have mistaken the purpose of what he saw.

this out. I do not want them to think it is merely a threat. They have had a week of threats already with very bad results. Ride out in the direction they have gone towards Magomoli's kraal. If you find they are not moving off, drive them as you heard me tell Manyow I would, and if they resist and attack you shoot them." "

Thirty-eight men rode away from the fort under Captain Lendy. They rode out in half-sections, along the road and across the rough flats to the west, sometimes at a walk with an occasional canter. The witnesses disagree about the distance. Brabant says they went three miles before they came in touch with the Matabele; another witness says seven; Sergeant Chalk says they rode along for about an hour. The rough hills where the action took place seemed to the writer, looking at them from Victoria, between four or five miles away. It appears that the impi was taken by surprise. They were scattered about killing and plundering. Manyow says he went towards Magomoli's kraal which the Matabele had been besieging, and found his young *majakas* driving away the Company's trained cattle 'at the point of their spears.' He remonstrated; but in vain. Many were at Magomoli's kraal, some had surrounded Makoombi's kraal, about five or six miles to the west of Victoria. 'My kraal,' says Makoombi in his evidence, 'is on a stone kopje, and the Matabele were besieging it on the day the white men went out. . . . The Matabele were at my kraal on that afternoon, saying, "Come out, we want to kill you." They ran away as soon as the white men fired the shots.'

Thus the Matabele were taken both red-handed and unprepared. At the western side of the lowlands among the rice-fields under the granite slopes

the patrol came upon parties of the invaders. Some were driving white men's cattle ; others were making for Makoombi's kraal ; others were crossing over from Mazibili's kraal (to the south of Victoria) burdened with loot. At the sound of the bugle—' Commence fire '—the police cantered into skirmishing order and advanced upon the kopjes, firing as they went. The party was armed with repeating rifles, and it is probable that almost every man was a crack shot. The Matabele began to drop. Umgandan, conspicuous in his white feather headdress, stood up, shook his assegai, and fell in his tracks. The extended line cantered, dismounted, shot, mounted, and cantered again. The Matabele had never before been so treated since their fathers fought the Boers in the Northern Transvaal. They put up no fight : they turned and fled. How many were killed it is impossible to say. Manyow said nine ; Makoombi, who was watching the fight from his kopje, said three Matabele and the rest ' dogs ' (i.e. *maholis* or slaves). No estimate puts the number shot at more than thirty. It was, in fact, a chase, and Lendy, fearing he might be drawn into an ambush, sounded the recall before it had gone very far. Tired and triumphant, driving Dunlop's recaptured red oxen before them, they returned to the Fort before sundown.

It was, if we fairly consider it—forty men sent out against three thousand—a notable action. And on the point of courage, it might serve as a puzzle to choose between the men who did such a thing, and the man who told them to do it.

Dr. Hans Sauer happened to be in Victoria at the time, and when the fight was over, Jameson turned to him and said, ' There are some Dutchmen in the

town. Go and ask them how many men they think it would take to fight the Matabele nation.'

Sauer went, and they all said, 'One thousand men.'

Then Sauer returned to Jameson and told him what the Dutchmen had said.

'I'll do it,' said Jameson.

Jameson then went to the telegraph office, and telegraphed to Rhodes that he proposed to fight the Matabele. Rhodes replied, 'Read Luke xiv. 31.' Whereupon Jameson looked up his Bible and found this text:—

'Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.'

Jameson replied that he had read Saint Luke, and that it was all right.<sup>1</sup>

The people of Victoria had pointed out to Jameson—what Jameson saw as clearly as they—that they must either fight or shut up shop. For their Makalaka servants had fled to their caves and fastnesses in the hills, and their Shangan labourers from the East Coast were either leaving or threatening to leave. Moreover, the settlers feared that when the next rains came, and they were cut off from succour by the flooded rivers, the Matabele would return and massacre them all.

Rhodes pleaded that the coffers of the Company were empty. He had already spent all his own ready money in setting up the telegraph line. In

<sup>1</sup> Michell says that this exchange took place *before* the action, but this seems improbable, the more as Wrey tells the present writer that *after* the action Jameson spent the whole evening at the telegraph office arguing out the point with the High Commissioner and Rhodes.

short, he had no money for this new adventure, and did not know where to get it.

But to all this Jameson replied, 'You have got to get the money,' and he kept on repeating, 'You have got to get the money. By this time to-morrow night you have got to tell me that you have got the money.'<sup>1</sup>

### III

On the morning of July 19, Jameson rang up Major Forbes, the Magistrate of Salisbury, and Mr. Duncan, Chief Official of the Company after himself, whom he had left in charge at that place.

Jameson telegraphed, as Forbes reports the message, that if they were to remain in Mashonaland, they must settle the Matabele question once and for all. 'He had thought it all out,' Forbes goes on, 'and his plan was that 250 men should advance from Salisbury, Victoria, Tuli, respectively, the former under myself, those from Victoria under Captain Lendy . . . and those from Tuli under Captain Raaff, Resident Magistrate of Tuli, while I was to assume command of all the Company's forces when joined.'

'The Doctor further said,' says Forbes, 'that his idea was that the whole force should be mounted, should start simultaneously from the three places, and march on Buluwayo. We were to take no wagons, but to take three or four days' food on the horses, after which we would live on native produce; 100 rounds ammunition per man, and, he added, he counted on our reaching Buluwayo, having done all that was required, before Christmas.'

'He then asked,' Forbes continues, 'if I was wil-

<sup>1</sup> Wrey's narrative to the author.

ling to go. I, of course, agreed at once, and the expedition was then and there determined on. The Doctor told me to let him know that evening what I should require in the way of horses, arms, equipment, clothing, etc., to complete the Salisbury column, and then went off to consult with Mr. Rhodes who was at Cape Town.' <sup>1</sup> Rhodes found the money by selling 50,000 of his own shares in the Chartered Company, and in the evening Major Forbes reported from Salisbury that he had everything necessary for 250 mounted men except 250 horses.

Then Jameson directed Commander Raaff, Ziedenberg, the contractor, and Argent Kirton to buy 1000 horses, where they were to be got—which was chiefly in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. But horses were hard to get. And doubts began to assail Major Forbes and his friends when they further considered Jameson's plan. They feared, in particular, that without wagons they could not carry sufficient ammunition, or provender which they feared the horses might not find upon the veld at that time of the year. Therefore, they pressed upon Jameson that they should take wagons, and to this Jameson agreed. Then they also put in for artillery, for swords for the mounted men, for bayonets for the unmounted men, for native contingents, and for other things, all of which meant time and expense.

<sup>1</sup> Major Patrick William Forbes was born at Whitechurch, Oxon, on August 31, 1861, and was educated at Rugby and Sandhurst. After joining the Inniskilling Dragoons he went out to South Africa in 1880. He was seconded for the British South Africa Company's service in November 1880, and was second in command of the British South Africa Company's Police when they entered Mashonaland. His account of the Matabele War forms the main part of the book called *The Downfall of Lobengula*.

As for the Army, almost every white man in Mashonaland volunteered upon terms, not of money, for the Company had none left, but of loot, the terms being—a farm of 3000 morgen (6000 acres) free of occupation; twenty gold claims; and a share of all cattle taken. The Volunteers were also guaranteed their existing mining claims in Mashonaland for six months after the war was finished.

After what had happened, Jameson, who knew the politics of Matabeleland, could hardly have expected peace. It is certain that he did not want the sort of peace he could have had. On July 22 he telegraphed to the Cape Town office of the Company: ‘Three years of negotiations had only induced them (the Matabele) to encroach more. Work is absolutely stopped; many wagons have off-loaded machinery at Matipis and gone back to Middle Drift; people and Government have lost large numbers of cattle, and I am sure work will not be recommenced, or even transport carried along the roads till some definite action on our part is taken.’

Nevertheless, Jameson did make one attempt—possibly for form’s sake—at a negotiated peace. On July 19 he sent out a patrol which reported that the Matabele had recrossed the Border. Jameson thereupon telegraphed to Palapye a message for Lobengula informing him of what had happened and demanding compensation for the damage done. This message reached Lobengula before his impi returned, and he replied in a humble and conciliatory fashion. But when his soldiers arrived they told the King lies to excuse their own defeat: that they had first been asked to disarm for the indaba, and then when disarmed had been attacked and shot down. And they told him also—what was the

truth—that Jameson had refused to deliver up the Mashonas who had gone into Victoria for refuge. Now Lobengula never was able to understand the feeling of the white men about the Mashonas. To a Matabele these other tribes were ‘dogs,’ ‘slaves,’ ‘cattle,’ without any title to live. It is not altogether a surprising point of view when we consider that for millions of years in the history of man the limit of the tribe circumscribed the humanity and the morality of its members. When Jameson refused to give them up, Lobengula thought himself robbed: ‘Are the Amaholi then yours, including their cattle?’<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Jameson thereupon made an end of all parley with the King and prepared for action. But Sir Henry Loch still busied himself to make peace. He was somewhat damped, however, by Lobengula’s replies. As for example:—

‘I shall return no cattle or compensate anybody for either cattle captured by my impi or damage done to property until such time that Rhodes first returns to me all the captives, their wives and children, cattle, goats, and sheep which were given protection to by the Victoria people, and had I known at the time when I despatched my impi . . . what I know now, I would have ordered them to capture and loot all they could lay their hands on belonging to the whites to compensate myself for the people and their property which were withheld from me.’

The High Commissioner continued to negotiate, but the die was cast. Colenbrander asked for horses. ‘The King,’ he wrote, ‘told Dawson that it would be as well for him and others to be away, as the hearts of his people were sore. . . . When the King

<sup>1</sup> C. 7171, p. 67.



fears his own people, it is time for us to clear out, if not already too late.' The King did not want war, but he could not keep peace. Jameson knew there was no longer any sense in talk; but Loch, with a pacific Government and a critical parliament at the other end of the wire, continued to hope and delay.

These dallyings were vexatious to a man certain of himself and of his plans, and Jameson feared above all things that the rains might come with flood and fever to disconcert his combinations.

On August 10, 1893, he writes to his brother Midge (who had left Egypt for Capri), offering him money 'as I suppose you must be getting hard up':—

'With this slump and our Matabele troubles of course I have lost a good deal—having just put all spare cash I could into this country; but still I can always manage a little to help you along. I am having a pretty lively time of it, as you may imagine, at present. Loben, on his hind legs in Matabeleland; the High Commissioner very nice, but won't let one do anything. . . . Of course, the military swells are preaching to me disaster from my plans, but one must cut one's coat according to the cloth—we can't lose this year or our show is burst for some time to come, so I am buying horses hand over fist—drafting them up as rapidly as possible, and must do the rest with the people and equipment we have here. Naturally I must go with the crowd myself, and it will be no pic-nic. Still there will be some excitement, and it will be a fine *coup* if we succeed, which we will. Then I really think you will see our show go ahead. I am writing all this as it may interest you, and you are so far away that we will be well into it before you get it. Otherwise, under the delicate circumstances, the main difficulty is to satisfy everybody without telling them anything, or at all events any details. I am constantly on the travel at present and not much time, so let the people at home know we are all right, etc.'

By Tuesday, September 5, the Salisbury column, not yet horsed, set out on the march for Fort Charter, a more central starting point, and arrived there upon the following Saturday, but found that most of the horses had not yet arrived. Dr. Jameson had planned to start by the middle of the month, and went down to Tuli to find that Raaff was still away buying horses. Upon September 23 Raaff returned; but short of the horses required. Duncan at Salisbury and Finch at Victoria thereupon commandeered all the horses that were left in the country, some sixty altogether, and although they were still short, Jameson resolved to start.

From Tuli he drove to Charter in a post-cart, Sir John Willoughby being with him, and they arrived at Charter on September 30. There he inspected the Salisbury column, settled details with Forbes, spoke to the men, and left the same evening for Victoria.

The High Commissioner, although he still hesitated, had by this time arranged that if there was to be war his Bechuanaland Border Police should help, and they had been moved forward to Macloutsi under Colonel Goold-Adams. And he also insisted that Captain Raaff and his column, which had been mainly recruited from Johannesburg, should be under Colonel Goold-Adams's command. From these and other indications Rhodes and Jameson believed that the High Commissioner wanted, if the war took place, to claim the results as part of the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland.

On October 2, Captain Forbes, as arranged with the Doctor, took his column forward two days' march through heavy sand to the west, closer to the Border, so that no time might be lost when the word was given. On the same day he telegraphed (from

Victoria) to the High Commissioner (at Cape Town) that the Matabele had again crossed the frontier and raided a Mashona village, and that one of his patrols, following up the spoor, had been fired upon by the Matabele; the natives reported large bodies of Matabele all along the Border. On October 4, Captain Forbes rode back to Fort Charter to await instructions.

And upon that day Jameson found time to write a long letter to his brother Sam :—

*'October 4, 1893.*

'DEAR SAM,—I daresay you think I have treated you badly in the way of letters ; but really I have had the most lively two months with no time for anything, and at the same time during the game of chess between the people here and the Imperial authorities the fewer communications even of a private kind the better. Now I am fairly square and will start on the 7th from here—sending off the Salisbury column on the 6th, and the Tuli crowd the same day that I go. The show is bigger than I intended and therefore more expensive, which is annoying. However, it will make it all the more certain. The usual thing, all heroic when only talking to be done, then demands for everything under the sun to ensure safety, so that I have had to chop and change from day to day till the present crowd arrived at of about 1000 men—wagons, transport, commissariat, etc., etc., and all the time brickmaking without straw, and Harris will have a gay old time of it meeting the cheques. In fact, it is a regular Army—my first and I swear it shall be my last—I always did hate the military gentlemen. Willoughby has behaved like a brick ; but of course his R.H. Guards ideas are scandalised, and as I could not put him in command—it would have broken up the show—it has been no easy business to get him to satisfy his own conscience to the "Army" and come with me as military adviser. In a force composed of

military and civil the bickerings you can easily understand—the civil as a rule worth a damned sight more than the professional; but the latter's prescriptive right to be top-sawyer. Then the whole crowd going without pay naturally try the blackmail trick on me at every turn.

'However, I have now got them all signed on under military law, and can do what I like with them—the last, last night. Still an interchange of telegrams with the High Commissioner and then off. I expect to finish the business and get back to Salisbury by end of November the latest—leaving Forbes in charge at Buluwayo. With love to Blanche and chicks, and trusting you to write to the home people as I have not time.—Yrs., L. S. JAMESON.

'P.S.—Tell Tom and Liz I got their letters and liked the former's preaching, and quite agree with him on the peace question—I have really been forced into this by the incompetency of my own officials before I could get down here, and there was no way out of it then but shooting, and after all, though expensive and troublesome, in the meantime, it will be a quicker way of making the country go ahead than my peaceful policy of gradual absorption of the Matabele amongst our black labourers. I still think the latter would have been better and could have been carried out. Midge writes me from St. Ives full of good intentions, but I am afraid he is destined to dither through life. Give my love to Kate, and tell her I would have written if I had had time, but will do so on my return.—L. S. J.

'Tell Hillier I would have written him but have no time.'

The High Commissioner might still have hesitated, but upon October 5 a patrol of his own Bechuanaland Border Police were fired at on the Shashi River by about thirty Matabele.

This decided him, and on the same day he sent a long telegram to Jameson of which this was the vital sentence:—

'Whatever your plans are with regard to the

advance of the columns from Fort Charter and Fort Victoria, they had better now be carried out.' Then he added: 'Should the impis withdraw peaceably and of their own accord to a safe distance, they must be allowed to do so without interruption; but if they should resist, then I have informed you, you should take such measures as may be necessary under the circumstances for the protection of life and property.' With this there were some adjurations on the requirements of humanity, and the necessity of discipline and good wishes for the success of the British South Africa Company's troops.

On October 6, Jameson replied that he was 'now acting upon Your Excellency's instructions to carry out my plans.' The Charter and Victoria columns were moving forward and the whole force was 'under strict military discipline.' And on the same day he telegraphed to Colonel Goold-Adams that he had placed Captain Raaff under his orders.

Two days afterwards Jameson and Willoughby rode out after the Victoria column, free at last of all things but the one big thing he meant to do.

In the meantime Lobengula sent a mission to the south to treat for peace. It consisted of Ingubogubo (Lobengula's half-brother) and the two indunas, Mantuse and Ingubo, with 'Jimmy' Dawson as interpreter. It met Colonel Goold-Adams's column at Tati, and thereupon Dawson went to see Selous, who was acting as guide to the column. While Dawson was eating and drinking with Selous, for he was faint after his journey, word was sent to Goold-Adams that the indunas were seeking to escape. Not knowing who they were, but thinking they were only natives who had followed Dawson out of Buluwayo, Goold-Adams ordered them to be put

under arrest, for he was anxious that no rumour of his movements should get to Buluwayo.

The indunas were thereupon put under arrest, being told at the same time that no hurt would be done them. Nevertheless Mantuse snatched a bayonet from one of the troopers, stabbed two of his guards, and tried to escape. Ingubo joined in and both indunas were killed in the struggle. Ingubogubo, who offered no resistance, was arrested, so that of the mission only one remained.

The thing had a horrible appearance; and the High Commissioner at once sent his Military Secretary to inquire into the affair. And this officer found that the death of these two indunas was due to a series of extraordinary mischances, for which neither the officers nor the men of the Police were to blame.<sup>1</sup>

Upon September 18, a few days after Parliament rose, Cecil Rhodes went aboard the *German* then going coastwise to Beira. Michell, his biographer, says that 'from Beira he went to Salisbury where he joined the little column then starting for the Front.' But this is an error. Rhodes did not join the column.

Dr. Jameson sent Hans Sauer to meet Rhodes on the Pungwe, and Dr. Sauer returned with Rhodes along the road to Salisbury. Dr. Sauer was very much puzzled by Rhodes's behaviour, for whereas there was urgent business on hand Rhodes dawdled upon the way, and the nearer he got to Salisbury the more he dawdled. When at last Dr. Sauer told Rhodes that the wagon, with a little pressing, could get into Salisbury that night, Rhodes replied that it was a very nice piece of veld for a camp.

<sup>1</sup> For full account of this unhappy business see the White Paper C. 7284 (1894).

So they outspanned, but presently Dr. Sauer perceived a messenger coming along post-haste on the road from Salisbury. The messenger delivered his message and Rhodes's face changed. 'Jameson has started,' he said, 'let's get into Salisbury.'

An explanation of this remarkable conduct may perhaps be gathered from a story in Michell's *Life of Rhodes* :—

'While between Beira and Salisbury he was of course out of touch with the High Commissioner, who became very impatient to speak with him over the wire. Hourly enquiries were made by Cape Town of Salisbury as to whether Rhodes had arrived, until at length the operator, with a picturesque touch all his own, wired—"I see Mr. Rhodes approaching over the brow of the hill."'

Mr. Rhodes, in fact, did not come over the brow of the hill until the British Government could no longer change its mind.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE MATABELE WAR

'And in regions far  
Such heroes bring ye forth  
As those from whom we came ;  
And plant our name  
Under that star  
Not known unto our north.'

DRAYTON.

#### I

DR. JAMESON and his officers made their plans with such care as men take who risk all upon one venture. There were in all four columns—Goold-Adams with his Police and Raaff's and Khama's men on the south, and Major Forbes and Major Allan Wilson with the Salisbury and Victoria Forces at two points on the east. Lobengula was at the centre, and had the advantage of what soldiers call the interior position. Possibly if he had acted with energy and resolution he might have overwhelmed one of the three before the other two were able to come to its assistance. As it was, he sent Gambo with three or four thousand men to stop Goold-Adams on the south, while the rest of the Army did not oppose the invasion from the east until after the Salisbury and Victoria columns had come together.

Fort Charter lies a little to the north of east of Buluwayo, at a distance, by the road the column took, of 220 miles. Victoria is 123 miles to the south-west of Fort Charter, and the two columns,



marching upon converging lines, met at a point called Iron Mine Hill, some 86 miles from Fort Charter and about the same distance from Victoria.

From that point on they marched over a high, wide, and generally open country, together yet not united—the two columns maintaining their separate organisations. The Salisbury column mustered 258 white men with 242 horses, 118 natives, 18 ox-wagons and 276 oxen, 1 Nordenfelt, 1 Gardner gun, 1 7-pounder, and 2 Maxims on galloping carriages. The Victoria column was stronger in men but weaker in horses; of white men it had 414, of horses only 172. It had 3 galloping Maxims, 1 7-pounder screw gun, and 1 1-pounder Hotchkiss, 18 ox-wagons, 40 native drivers and voor-loopers, and a native contingent of 400 friendly Mashonas.

As it was when the Pioneers marched into Mashonaland, so it was now—the wagons were travelling fortresses. And this use of the wagons was reduced to such a perfection that the Salisbury column could form laager in two or three minutes, and in ten or fifteen minutes could so fortify itself with thorn bush that it was impregnable to anything but artillery.

The Salisbury column marched in two parallel lines of wagons some twenty-five yards apart. When the column laagered, two wagons in front and the two behind were pulled round across the two ends, and the six wagons on either side were left diagonally in their two lines, so that the on-corner of the one behind touched the off-corner of the one in front. Every driver carried with him two three-foot steel posts, and when he had driven his wagon into its place he unhooked the whole span of oxen and pinned down both ends of the trek-tow and then tied the oxen up to it, so that they stood or lay alongside

the outer wheels with their long horns like a fence outside a wall, the horses being picketed within. When four guns were mounted at the four corners and the fifth on the front, and the two ends further strengthened with thorns, then the laager was complete.<sup>1</sup>

And so it will be seen that with vedettes on either side and scouts and advance guard ahead, these columns were proof against surprise. At a word of warning they curled themselves up like a porcupine and presented to the enemy nothing but the points of their guns.

Thus the two columns went along and for a while met with little opposition. Jameson and Willoughby nearly always rode together, sometimes by themselves and sometimes with scouting patrols well in advance of the columns or out upon the flanks.

‘He would not realise,’ Major Forbes says of Jameson, ‘how important it was that he should keep as much as possible out of danger, but whenever there was any outside work to be done, he insisted upon going.’<sup>2</sup>

Jameson was in this difficult position: he was civilian head of the expedition—‘representative and attorney of Mr. Rhodes’—yet not in military command. ‘Willoughby,’ says Forbes, ‘was accompanying Dr. Jameson as his friend pure and simple, so I understood, but in reality as his military adviser. This I did not know until after the whole business was over, and I can safely say that he never advised me in any way.’

These Rhodesian pioneers were, it should be re-

<sup>1</sup> The Victoria column formed laager similarly, only that the wagons were placed in the figure of a diamond.

<sup>2</sup> *Downfall of Lobengula*, p. 102.

membered, very often cadets of good families, young men who had been officers in the Army or in the Navy, or held commissions in the Police, or the Pioneers, or the Volunteer corps. There had been such a galaxy of officers in Salisbury as to put the democratic de Waal quite out of temper.

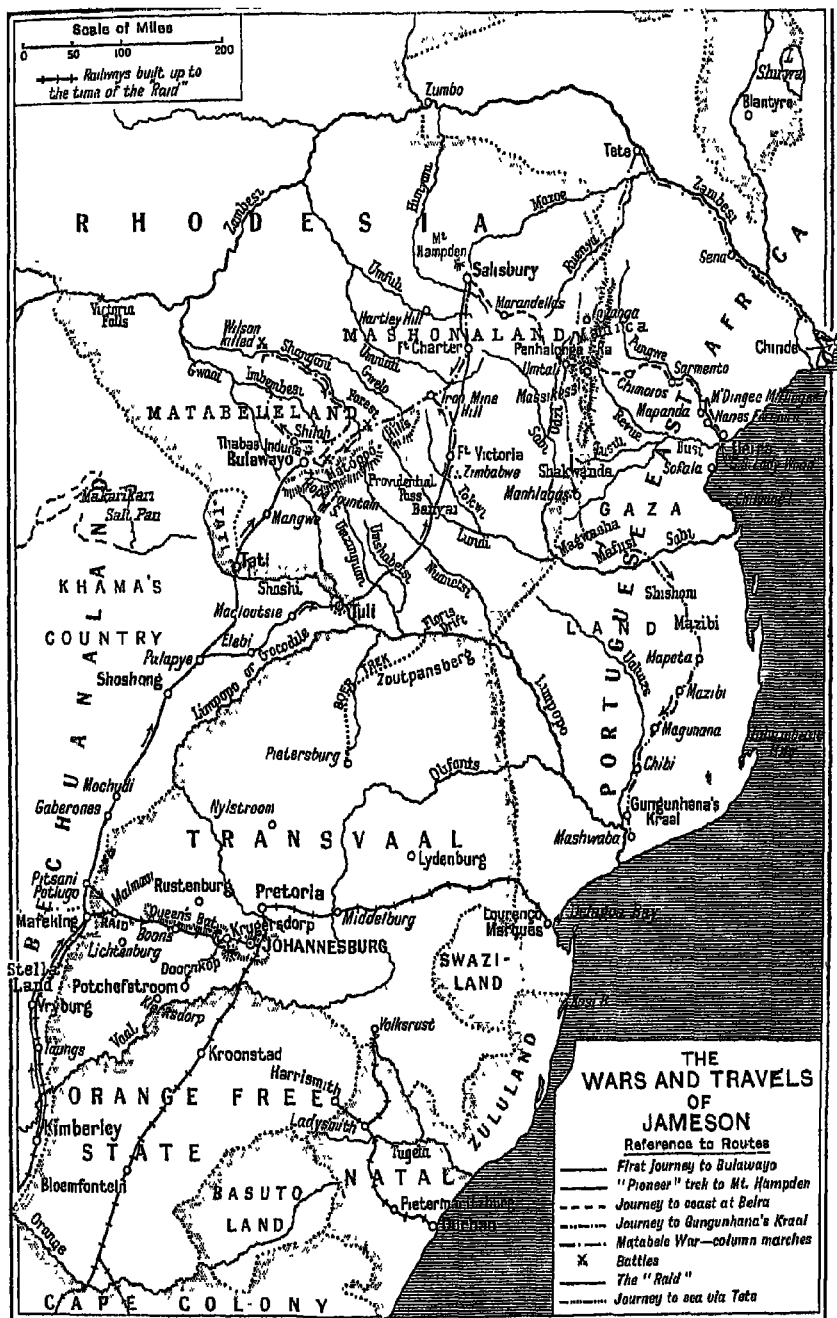
‘Every Johnny to whom I was introduced,’ he says, ‘was a major, a commander, a captain, a colonel, a lieutenant, or a sergeant, but common soldiers I saw none.’<sup>1</sup>

When the column was formed, Forbes was puzzled to find places for them all: he had more officers than troopers, and after every post was filled, ‘there were several gentlemen in Salisbury who did not wish to join troops but were willing to go into Matabeleland and to make themselves generally useful, so I formed them into a scouting section for special duty.’

Two of these gentlemen—a dispute arising—insisted upon wakening Jameson in the middle of the night to decide upon the question of their status. Jameson heard the point put, then murmured sleepily, ‘You can all have the rank of captains but must take the pay of troopers,’ and went off to sleep again.

Jameson had trouble enough to reconcile these differences and keep the column in sweet temper, and he saw also to the health of the expedition. As for example, on October 15 Captain Campbell of Major Forbes’s staff was shot by a native from behind a rock. When he was brought in, Dr. Jameson, Dr. Edgelow, and Dr. Stewart examined him together and decided that his only chance was

<sup>1</sup> *With Rhodes in Mashonaland*, p. 230.



immediate amputation of a leg, for the hip-joint was shattered. Dr. Jameson, being the best surgeon there, cut off the limb, and his servant found him afterwards with his shirt wringing wet: he had washed it out so that none might see the blood with which it was stained.<sup>1</sup>

On October 22, in foggy weather, the column went through a strip of thick bush—the southern end of the Somabula forest. Near here poor Burnett was killed, shot in the stomach while scouting. But the columns were allowed to cross the Shangani River, and to form laager on a piece of fairly open ground on the western bank. Then about four in the morning of October 25, while it was still dark, the Matabele attempted a surprise. By chance they advanced over a kraal of Mashona friendlies who were sleeping outside, and the firing at that point gave the alarm to the pioneers, who manned their wagons and returned the fire.

It was part of Lobengula's evil destiny that almost at the last moment he had armed his regiments with the rifles which Rhodes had given him. They were not particularly good rifles, and the Matabele did not then know how to use them. They thought that the higher they raised the sights the harder the bullets hit, and their fire was generally too high. And they also believed that the shells which fell among them were full of little white men who ran out as soon as they burst and killed everybody near. For that reason whenever a shell exploded all the Matabele round about fired their rifles at the explosion.

<sup>1</sup> Captain John Alexander Livingstone Campbell of the Royal Artillery and a Magistrate in Mashonaland. The poor fellow died next day. 'He was extraordinarily plucky over it, but had had no hope from the first,' says Major Forbes.

The Matabele might have done better if they had trusted to the old Zulu tactics of a surprise rush with shield and assegai. As it was, they stopped and fired, and their fire did little harm.

When dawn began to break, the white men saw from their wagons a strong force collecting on the top of a small rise some 350 yards to the south-east of the laager.

'They advanced down the slope,' says Major Forbes, 'in a most casual way, without hurrying or attempting to take cover, and I allowed no firing at them. When they got to the bottom of the slope, they suddenly sat down and commenced to fire at us.'

It was part of the Insukameni Regiment experimenting with a new form of warfare and a new weapon in the face of the enemy. And they suffered for it: the greater part of those who came on were shot down by the rifles and Maxims of the column.<sup>1</sup>

In several places the enemy got to within 150 yards, and a few to within 80 yards of the laager; but they could get no farther for the fire of the seven machine guns and the rifles, and the greater part of the enemy never got beyond the edge of the surrounding bush. The heavy firing lasted for twenty minutes and then died away. At 4.45 Captain Heany and Captain Spreckley went out with their mounted troops to clear the bush, but were driven back, and at 5.30 the enemy made a second attack; but there was now clear daylight, and under the

<sup>1</sup> Four of the King's regiments—the Insukameni, the Ihlati, the Amaveni, and the Siseba, and four military kraals, the Jingen, the Euxna, the Zinyangene, and the Induba, joined in the attack—in all between 5000 and 6000 men. They had been ordered to rush the columns while they were on the march through the Somabula forest, but lost their opportunity. A full account of this battle was given by Willoughby in his letter to the High Commissioner, C. 7290, p. 44 *et seq.*

certain fire of rifles and Maxims this attack failed miserably.

When the survivors of the Insukameni appeared before their King and confessed to their defeat, the Umbezu and the Ingubu, his two best regiments, laughed at them, 'saying that it was ridiculous that they, the crack regiments, should have to be sent to beat us. And they told the King that they would not have to fight, but would walk into the laagers, leading us out on the other side, killing the elder men and keeping the rest for slaves.'<sup>1</sup>

Such were the boasts of the two regiments which were to lead the attack in the decisive battle of the campaign, the battle of Imbembesi. After the Shangani fight of October 25, the column continued its march along the watershed on high, dry, and stony ground, where neither cattle nor horses could find any grass. To the north lay the interminable bush, but on the front and to the south were the wide, open plains of Matabeleland, now dry and brown but after summer rains the grazing ground of innumerable cattle. And the southern horizon, as far as the eye could see from east to west, rested upon the rugged outline of the Matoppos, granite ramparts of the plateau. Only from an occasional shot at picket or patrol did the column know that the enemy still hung round their line of march. On the 26th Captain Williams's scouting party was nearly cut off; but all galloped through save only Captain Williams, whose horse, a strong-mouthed brute, ran away with him and carried him to his death among the enemy.<sup>2</sup> On the 27th the right flanking party

<sup>1</sup> Major Forbes's account in *The Downfall of Lobengula*.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Gwynnd Williams, eldest son of General Owen Williams, who had been a captain in the Royal Horse Guards, and had come to Mashonaland two years before with Lord Randolph Churchill.

was engaged all along the line ; but the enemy were beaten off, and then for several days the column pursued its way without seeing or hearing of the Matabele.

By October 30 the horses and cattle were almost bested by the desert and barren wilderness, and the two columns laagered for a day on the headwaters of the Manyami River, one of the tributaries of the Umsingwani. Upon the 31st mounted troops ahead of the laager found some 3000 of the enemy in a line of kopjes which guarded the great military kraal of Insingwen ; but the enemy abandoned the position and the kraal without a fight, and fell back upon the broken bushy country of the Imbembesi Valley. Here the enemy had ground the most favourable for its purpose, a surprise rush upon the columns when caught in difficulties of the march. But the scouts warned Forbes of his danger in good time, and turning to the south, he went round the head of the valley, keeping upon high and fairly open ground all the time.

Thus on November 1 at half-past eleven in the morning he came to a halt within sight of Thabas Induna on a piece of open ground where he thought he might safely rest. It was on a steep rise within 500 yards of the bush, and the columns formed laager upon either side of a small native kraal which promised good night shelter for part of their cattle.

The position, although at first sight attractive, had elements of danger, for upon the north, within 150 yards of the right face of the Salisbury laager, there was a sudden drop in the ground, and on the crest three partly-demolished huts which might give an enemy cover in an approach from the bush beyond. And in time as well as place the Matabele



had a perilous advantage, for the natives of the Salisbury column were still gathering thorns to bush the laager, and the horses and cattle of the column were watering at the stream a mile away.

The attack began about 12.50. First a dense mass of the enemy were seen, apparently retreating towards Thabas Induna. On being shelled they wheeled round and advanced upon the column. At the same time a picket reported that the Matabele were advancing through the bush on the north-western side, and soon the whole bush to the west and north was seen to be full of Matabele skirmishers running up to its fringe on the northern front of the laager.

The men of the column who were on the open ground picked up their saddles, rifles, bandoliers, and ran for their places on the wagons. The horses and cattle watering at the stream were turned for home and driven up at a run. By good fortune the stream lay on the side of the laager away from the attack. But as the natives ran out on the south side to bring them in, the horses of the Salisbury column took fright and stampeded to the west, carrying the horses of the Victoria column with them. The whole crowd thundered across a dry spruit west of the camp and headed straight for the enemy.

For a time it looked as if nothing could save them ; but Captain Borrow, Sir John Willoughby, and Trooper Neale jumped on three of the few remaining horses and galloped after them. Others followed and the horses were turned under a hot fire within a hundred yards of the enemy.

In the meantime, the Matabele were pushing out of the bush along the dead ground, and a few got as

far as the three huts on the crest. From there and from the edge of the bush they kept up a heavy fire upon the camp. But although they were continuously reinforced by line-upon-line skirmishers, coming up in open order at a run, they could get no farther against the terrible fire of the Maxims and the Gardner gun and the rifles of the laager, and although the Matabele fire was heavy, it was high, and most of the bullets, if they hit at all, lodged harmlessly in the head shelter formed of mealie bags and kits on the buck-rails of the wagons.

As the Salisbury laager lay on the north side of the camp, it bore the brunt of the attack, but Major Wilson, seeing that his side of the camp was not threatened, moved out three of his Maxims, the Hotchkiss, and part of his men into the open on either side of the camp and reinforced the fire of the Salisbury front.

By half-past one, under this well-directed fire, the enemy began to waver; they gradually drew back into the bush, and by two o'clock their fire ceased altogether, and the dismounted men of the Victoria column, pursuing, turned the retreat into a rout.

The Umbezu and Ingubu regiments—together 1700 fighting men—who had boasted before their King, led the attack and suffered most in the fight.

‘It would appear,’ says Sir John Willoughby, ‘that the Umbezu and Ingubu were practically annihilated. I cannot speak too highly of the pluck of these two regiments. I believe that no civilised troops could have withstood the terrific fire they did for at most half as long. It was fortunate that only

a few perceived the cover afforded by the nature of the ground to our right front.' <sup>1</sup>

The Matabele in all are said to have lost between 800 and 1000 men in this battle, and their losses fell almost altogether upon these two regiments. The Iseyeba, on the right of the Ingubu, never left the cover of the bush; the Ishlati, although they came into the open, were far to the enemy's right, and the Insukameni, who had suffered most in the Shangani fight, were on his extreme right and fully a mile away.

Of the white men only 1 was killed, but 3 afterwards died of their wounds, and 5 white men and 1 coloured boy were slightly wounded.

In such fashion the fate of the Matabele War was decided. After this brave but ill-planned attack the Matabele never fought another pitched battle, and could muster up resolution for nothing more than surprises and ambushes on pickets and patrols.

## II

On November 4 the columns reached Buluwayo. Before they entered they heard the noise of an explosion, and they found the town deserted and on fire. Two white men came to meet them, Fairbairn and Usher. They reported that Lobengula had left before the battle of Imbembesi, but before he left, he had called Sekulu, the great Chief of Buluwayo, and charged him, upon his life, with the safety of

<sup>1</sup> This account of the battle is taken in the main from Sir John Willoughby's report (B.S.A. Company's archives). See also Major Forbes's account. 'Fancy,' said one of these black Guardsmen, as he was brought dying into the laager, and looked round with glazing eyes at the young Englishmen, 'the Umbezu being beaten by a lot of boys!'

the two white men. These three remained beside the deserted town; but when the column had reached the hill of Thabas Induna, only twelve miles away, Sekulu placed gunpowder in the King's house and blew it up. Then he said to the white men, who were at Fairbairn's store:—

‘I have obeyed the orders of the King, but now I must go lest your people slay me, for they are close at hand. And if any ill befall you, it will be from your own people and not from mine.’

Thus Jameson found Buluwayo—the royal military kraal burnt to the ground, a blackened hole where the King's house had been. But beside the rocky drift over the stream, only half a mile to the south of these ruins, Dawson's store was still standing with its dwellings and outhouses, surrounded by its seven-foot stockade of Mopani trunks, and Colenbrander's store, a quarter of a mile to the south-east, was also standing.

Dr. Jameson now sent Burnham and Ingram south with the news, and Burnham rode 210 miles to Palapye, where the telegraph was, in four days, and sent the news to Rhodes.

Colonel Goold-Adams was still 60 miles to the south of Buluwayo when Jameson entered the town. He had defeated Gambo on November 2, but Khama's men had deserted him, and he was impeded by the scarcity of water, so that he did not reach Buluwayo until November 15.

In the meantime, Jameson, thinking there could be no peace save with the King, sent Lobengula a letter desiring him to come. As he had no answer to this letter for some days, he arranged with Forbes to send 200 horsemen after the King; ‘but,’ says Forbes, ‘after arrangements were made he found

there was such a strong feeling against it on account of the danger, that he countermanded it.'

On November 9 a letter came in from Lobengula, written by one John Jacobs, his clerk, who said that the King had received the Doctor's letter and 'so I will come.'

But he did not come, and Jameson grew more and more anxious, for the rains were now at hand. So at last after dark on the night of November 15 he sent out a patrol under Major Forbes. This he was the better able to do as the Bechuanaland Border Police had by this time arrived in Buluwayo, and the patrol was thus composed of the Salisbury column 90; of the Victoria column 60; of the Tuli column 60; and of the Bechuanaland Border Police 90; with 200 native bearers, 4 Maxims, and a 7-pounder gun.

Jameson himself could not go with the column because of the political work to be done in Buluwayo, and the lack of his resolute will is seen at every step of this unfortunate expedition. There were two voices throughout. Major Forbes was a conscientious and capable officer; but deferred too much to the opinion of Captain Raaff, who had great prestige in native warfare, but being sick unto death had no heart for this business.

We gather this weakness of command from Major Forbes's own narrative. Thus for example:—

'I had intended to go on that night, but in the evening Captain Raaff persuaded me that it would be better to send scouts out first to find out whether the King had really left Intaba-gi-Konga or not, and although I did not wish to waste any time, as the King might go travelling on all the time, I gave in to him.'

And over and over again we find Major Forbes

deferring against his own better judgment to the timidity of Captain Raaff, although he knew that Raaff was undermining his men by telling them of the dangerous position they were in. Thus:—

‘I had intended to have gone on down the river that afternoon, but Captain Raaff again persuaded me to wait until we could send out scouts to report what was in front of us. I was very much against waiting, but had to give in to him, as I feared that if I moved after what he had said, he would unsettle all his men to such an extent, by talking about the difficulties of the matter, that their *morale* might suffer. . . . I heard that there was great dissatisfaction in the force about going any farther. . . . I was not told until some time afterwards this agitation had been started among Raaff’s men, and that he had actually told them that they should go back that day.’

And again:—

‘Captain Raaff pointed out that it was a very dangerous mission we were on with what he called a handful of men, no reserve ammunition, and no means of carrying the wounded.’

This nervousness and disunion infected the force, and things got so bad that at last it was resolved to consult the men whether they should go forward or back.

‘While we were talking Burnham and Armstrong returned and reported that they . . . had seen a large number of natives and cattle all travelling east . . . that they had crossed a spoor nearly a mile wide of a very large number of cattle . . . not less than 7000; this spoor crossed the river, which was full of dead cattle that had been crushed to death, and the pools through which they had been driven were covered with fish trampled to death; that although they had been close to the natives they had not been

molested in any way ; they also saw the country was open along the river five or six miles.'

Thus golden chances slip away while men debate whether they will or will not.

When the men were consulted all but seventeen of the Salisbury column wanted to return, but Allan Wilson said that all his men wanted to go on, and of the Tuli column all hung back but four. As for the Police, being an Imperial service, they were not consulted. Major Forbes sent a message to Dr. Jameson with the news of what had happened, and started to return ; but he got no farther than Umhlangeni when he got the Doctor's reply, which was that reinforcements, food, and ammunition were being sent on to Shiloh, that Forbes was to meet them there, and 'get on the King's spoor and follow it right up.'

At Shiloh out of his own force and the reinforcements Forbes made up a force of 300 men, and sent 280 back to Buluwayo. Of the Salisbury column he took Captain Borrow and 22 men, all mounted ; of the Victoria column 70 mounted and 100 dismounted men ; and of the Bechuanaland Border Police 78 mounted men. Of the Tuli column he took 20 men, and he made the mistake of taking Captain Raaff, although Forbes must have known well by this time that Raaff had no heart for the enterprise. Of artillery he took 4 Maxims and a Hotchkiss gun.

'I did not wish to take any wagons with me,' Forbes goes on to say, 'but I knew as they were there I should have to, if it was only for a few days, and I decided on taking some dismounted men to send back with them when it had been proved to

every one's satisfaction that it was impossible to take them on.'

Such was not the spirit for such an adventure. And thus, still halting between two opinions, the new force followed the spoor of the King. If they had been of one mind and had gone forward with resolution they might already have succeeded, for when they turned back, as they now heard, the King was only three miles away, 'very sick and almost deserted.' Lobengula himself wanted to return, as was afterwards discovered; but his indunas would not let him; and he even sent the gold he had received from Rhodes to Jameson as an earnest of his desire for peace, but two thievish troopers, meeting the embassy on the way, took the money and said nothing.

Now heavy rains were falling almost every day and sometimes in the night, so that the men were drenched as often as dry. The oxen by this time were all knocked up so that it was manifest to all that the wagons must be left behind. On November 28 Major Forbes picked about 160 of the best horses, on which he mounted of the Salisbury column 28, of the Victoria column 46, of the Tuli column 24, and 60 of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

These he took with him and the rest he sent back to Umhlangeni. They rode through a bushy country, hearing sometimes tidings of the King, and following his spoor all the way. On November 30, after a night of heavy rain, the column came to a kraal full of people, where 'the men all hid among the women,' and there they heard that the King was on the Shangani River, few people with him, but fragments of his broken regiments guarding his rear. The King's spoor kept a straight course, his wagons



'having driven over everything but the biggest trees.' They passed two wagons which had been abandoned and burnt, and the King's bath chair, which had been drawn by sixteen men. And so, hot upon the King's heels, through the litter and rumour of his retreat, they drew near to the Shangani. In the afternoon, coming to the edge of the bush, they emerged upon a wide, open flat, and saw the King's camp before them. It was deserted, but the fires were still alight and in one of the huts a small slave boy lay asleep.

As it wanted only an hour and a half of dark and the column went but slowly, Major Forbes told Allan Wilson to take twelve of his best horsemen and 'push on along the spoor as fast as he could to see which way it went, returning by dusk.'

Major Wilson picked out his twelve men, and two of his officers, Captain Kirton and Captain Greenfield, also went with him. And a little while after, Burnham the American scout coming in, Major Forbes gave him his horse and told him to follow Wilson, so that he might help in reading the spoor.

After they had gone Major Forbes heard from the slave boy and a Matabele whom they had captured that an impi of about 2800 men had been made ready to attack him, so he told Captain Raaff to double his pickets and prepare for a watchful night.

It was now dark and Major Wilson had not returned. At about nine o'clock two of Wilson's men came in with foundered horses and said that Wilson had crossed the river on the King's spoor and meant to sleep where he was. And at eleven o'clock three messengers arrived who said that Wilson, with a native for guide, was close upon the King, and had

passed through three scherms<sup>1</sup> full of women, children, and cattle, and farther on five more scherms through which they had ridden, looking for the King. And in every scherm, as they went through, they called out that they came to speak with the King and intended hurt to none. And the people in the scherms had not ventured to touch them.

Captain Napier, who was one of the messengers, said that Wilson expected Forbes to press on with the column under cover of night and attack the King at dawn. But this Major Forbes refused to do, 'as we were surrounded and expected to be attacked at any moment . . . and it would be very dangerous to cross the river through deep sand in the dark.'

On the other hand he could not bring himself to recall Major Wilson, who seemed to be in touch with the King, so he took a middle course: he sent Captain Borrow with twenty mounted men.

Early in the morning of December 4 after a rainy night, when the column was preparing to move, they heard heavy firing from across the river. It lasted several minutes and then ceased.

As the column followed the King's spoor along the river bank a hot fire was opened upon it from the bush, 300 yards on its left. In a short time Forbes had 16 horses and 2 mules killed and 5 men wounded, and, his position being bad, he fell back upon some mopani trees under the bank of the river, and there built a scherm and dug rifle-pits. Looking down upon the river they could see that it was now a roaring flood.

In the course of these operations Burnham the scout, his comrade Ingram, and Gooding, who had

<sup>1</sup> A scherm is a fortified camp.

all been with Wilson rode in: and Burnham, as he jumped off his horse, said to Forbes, 'I think I may say we are the sole survivors of that party.'

Burnham told Forbes that Borrow and his men had reached Wilson before daybreak. They had resolved to make a rush for the King, and had ridden up to the King's scherm, which lay near the head of a little valley with bush on either side. They could see two wagons—one of which was empty, for Burnham saw right through it—and they called the King's name.

For answer they were met by a heavy fire and Wilson had fallen back, galloping and then halting to fight, and then galloping away again. When they had got clear of the Matabele who pursued them and were 'shogging along,' Wilson sent Burnham with the two others back to Forbes to report. But the three had not ridden ahead more than a hundred yards when they perceived a strong force of Matabele rushing at them from the bush. They escaped by galloping hard away to the left; but as they went they heard the sound of heavy firing, and knew that Wilson was being attacked. They made for the river and found it flooded, so they followed its upward course for a mile and a half and then contrived to swim across, and so reached the patrol.

Upon these heavy tidings Major Forbes resolved that he would stay where he was that night and turn back in the morning, since it was impossible to go on, and useless to remain.

And so began a melancholy retreat: the column marched with a Maxim in front and a Maxim behind, carrying their wounded, with their prisoners and captured cattle in the middle. They were tired and despondent and drenched with frequent rains. They

were shaken by constant alarms, and once in a gully surrounded by bush they were ambushed, but contrived to shake themselves free with the loss of only two horses stabbed and one man shot. Their horses gave out one by one, and they left a hundred behind them along their line of march. The terror of the threatening bush and the constant forebodings of Captain Raaff almost overwhelmed them. They left the Maxim carriages behind, because they made a noise on the stones, and marched at night carrying the Maxims in blankets and then on the backs of horses. Every day, bar one, it rained, and the men were never dry. They had no overcoats and some of them no blankets. Their boots were worn out, and some of them were fain to make sandals or slippers out of their wallets. The wounded men were carried on the Maxim carriages until these were abandoned, and then rode or were supported on the horses, the others limping beside them. But as the officers testify, 'There was no grumbling, and every man did his duty.' In such wretched plight they retreated for ten days, until at last, upon December 15, they were met by Selous and Acutt with glad tidings of relief.

Forbes had sent messengers on the night of the disaster; they had reached Jameson on the 7th, and the Doctor and Willoughby had started next day with food and ammunition in wagons and all the men they could muster. They had got to Umhlangeni on the 10th and sent out scouts to find the patrol. And Rhodes himself, who had come up to Buluwayo from the south, had followed the relief column and was now at Umhlangeni.

All this Selous told Forbes and the troubles of the patrol were at an end. As for Allan Wilson and his

men the hope was long cherished that some at least had survived. But Burnham was right. They had all perished. And Captain Raaff, whose nervelessness was the result of ill-health, died a few days afterwards.<sup>1</sup> Thus ended the unfortunate Shangani patrol.<sup>2</sup>

Mjan himself, the Commander-in-Chief of the Matabele army, had been at the King's scherm when Allan Wilson hailed the wagons on the morning of December 4. It was he who had replied with rifle bullets to Wilson's call for the King. And when Wilson retreated he had met part of Mjan's impi which had been sent to ambush the column at the drift of the Shangani and was then returning, as the floods had prevented it from carrying out its orders. Between these two forces Wilson found no way of escape, and so, making a ring of their horses, the party died fighting. All the white men, the natives reported, had four or five wounds; but when one was wounded another bandaged him with a strip of his shirt and they went on fighting.

'One man was especially mentioned, for, when all the others were shot down and more or less wounded, and though himself wounded in several places, he collected some rifles and revolvers, and made a stand on a neighbouring ant-heap, keeping the enemy at bay. For a long time the enemy could not kill him, and he shot down at least eight or ten before he was eventually shot down himself, and on running in at last they found him with six or eight wounds in his body.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Raaff died at Bulawayo on the morning of January 2, from what was then called 'inflammation of the bowels,' i.e. peritonitis, 'super-vening from Bright's disease of the kidneys and liver complaint, both of many years' standing.' He was buried the same day with full military honours, as he deserved.

<sup>2</sup> Forbes is our chief authority; but see also Captain Coventry's report (C. 7290, p. 69 *et seq.*).

<sup>3</sup> *The Downfall of Lobengula*, p. 207.

And an old Matabele induna, Sivalo Mahlana, who was there, afterwards said of this stand :—

‘We fought from sunrise until midday. . . . When the white men could see there was no mercy, nor a way of escape, they said, “Let us thank God who must receive us to-day.” Then they sang. So all the white men died with a great number of the Matabele. . . . In the afternoon the Matabele picked out their dead to bury them and on the morrow they did likewise. Others were covered with the branches of the trees and bushes, both black and white. Not a garment was taken from the dead ; they were all left as they fell, to be devoured by the vultures and the wolves.’<sup>1</sup>

As for the King he had ridden away farther up the little valley of the Pupu River on the morning of the 3rd, so that both wagons were empty when Wilson hailed them. And there Lobengula lived for a while a few miles beyond the Shangani ; but he got very thin and full of sores, and presently died. Thereupon Mjan, his Commander-in-Chief, took his body and buried it in a cave in a sitting posturo, with an assegai in the belly, so that the King sat upright against the rock, and walled up the mouth of the cave thereafter.

<sup>1</sup> Statement by Sivalo Mahlana translated by Rev. Bowen Rees and published in *Bukwayo Chronicle* of February 15, 1917. We quote the passage because its tone shows the impression made on the Matabele by the bearing of Allan Wilson's party. But it is doubtful if the Matabele heard either singing or prayer, and truth compels us to add that the dead were stripped, although they were not mutilated. See Jameson's telegram to Rhodes of January 10, 1894 (C. 7290, p. 84).

‘They fought,’ says Jameson, ‘for about six hours, killing a great number of Matabele ; but finished their ammunition. Then the Matabele fired at them from close quarters, killing, as they thought, those still alive. After a time they approached nearer and found there were some still alive, all seriously wounded, writing on pieces of paper. As soon as the Matabele came up close to them, they drew their revolvers ; but the whole thing was very soon finished, and not one of the whole party was left alive. The bodies were not mutilated, but stripped of clothes with the exception of one man with a long beard (Watson). After stripping the bodies the men and horses were piled in a heap.’

## CHAPTER XX

### FRUITS OF VICTORY

'He to the Commons' feet presents  
A kingdom for his first year's rents,  
And (what he may) forbears  
His fame to make it theirs.'

MARVELL.

VICTORY thus came to Jameson under the shadow of disaster. He waited in Buluwayo with an anxious mind, longing to follow the King and make an end of the war, and yet not daring because of the political conflict then being waged for the future of the territory. Cecil Rhodes, who had followed the column to Buluwayo, went south to meet the High Commissioner; but Jameson remained. In a letter from Buluwayo to his brother Sam, dated December 24, 1893, he unburdens his perplexed mind:—

'The final settlement has been slower than I expected; but this is really due to the extent of the country and the distance and the pace at which the Matabele can run. In Zululand the King was in a small confined area—here our people chased him 180 miles N.W. from here, and by this time I expect he is over the Zambesi, which is perhaps a better solution than catching him, as it ensures some of the troublesome spirits going with him. At all events this is the most comfortable way to look at it. Our commanders did their best; but I am afraid there was a little error in judgment amongst them—in fact their statements are so extraordinary that I have had to institute a court of inquiry to find out the share of blame if any on Forbes and Raaff.

The latter I have to sift on many points and will get at the truth. This damned Imperial question prevented my going on with Forbes, as I could not leave Goold-Adams to receive the submission of the people who were coming in daily and so give further point to the H.C. However, we must get at the truth in case any of Wilson's party are killed, which is more than probable, though the native information is still the same and agrees from all sides, that Wilson defeated the natives and then went on in the direction taken by the King—so that I have good hopes some of them, at all events, will turn up later here or in Mashonaland. They were the picked men of the crowd.

'This inquiry will mean washing some dirty linen in public, but it can't be helped. I have never been very favourably inclined to the military element and hope this will be the last "Army" I shall have anything to do with. However, the disbandment is done now, the Johannesburg lambs, also the Salisbury and Victoria crowds, under way, and the new police force in order and at their patrol work. The prospectors also are rapidly getting away in all directions, the natives coming in well with their arms, and altogether a chance of peace and quietness in front of one. You are quite right. I shall not get away till this country and Mashonaland are running smoothly; but by the end of next dry season I shall try to get off for a few months—as one gets a bit stale and uncivilised after so long an interval on the veld. My idea if it comes off is to go home by the East coast, spending practically no time at home, but staying in Egypt and Greece *en route*. This is all in the clouds at present, but it is as well to have it to look forward to. . . .'

The 'damned Imperial question,' to which Jameson refers, was a new form of the old controversy which Rhodes had fought out long before with Mackenzie and Warren in Bechuanaland. Rhodes had then been supported by Sir Hercules Robinson, who had learnt by bitter experience to agree with



his friend in his distrust of the Imperial factor. Sir Hercules Robinson was succeeded by Sir Henry Loch, a strong man and a good servant of the Crown ; but without Robinson's experience of the lamentable history of South Africa. Loch worked for a British South Africa ; but he favoured the policy of direct Imperial action, and his first thought of the future of Matabeleland was that it should be under the Administration of the Crown.

As early as May 25, 1891, Sir Henry Loch addressed a despatch to the Colonial Office, pressing for the appointment of an Administrator and executive authorities responsible to him for the government of the Company's territories. The Company was to provide an annual contribution to the cost, which might be sufficiently supplemented by Customs and hut tax, and was thus to be free ' to devote its best energies to the development of the commercial resources of the country.' Otherwise, Sir Henry Loch warned the Colonial Office, the Company might involve the British Government in a war with Lobengula ' without their previous knowledge or consent.'

This proposal, which at first had the support of Rhodes, was declined because the British Government would not face the responsibility ; if it had been accepted the course of this story would have been different. As it was, the timidity of Downing Street again convinced Rhodes that nothing was to be hoped from the ' Imperial factor.'

When the British Government, as Loch had foreseen, were faced by a war with Lobengula, the High Commissioner again pressed for his old policy, and partly to that end and partly to support the Company's forces, he directed the Bechuanaland police to advance upon Buluwayo in concert with Jameson.

But the Bechuanaland police were unaccountably delayed, and although they had a shorter way to go, and a smaller force against them, did not get to Buluwayo until after the Company's forces had taken the capital. Whether Rhodes had a hand in this delay is a point on which there has been speculation but no evidence. Certain it is that he took advantage of it to press his claim for the fruits of victory. The Imperial Government had refused to pay the piper, and Rhodes was determined not to let them call the tune. In a telegram of November 1, 1893, he claimed that his people had beaten the Matabele 'single-handed'; that they had never asked the British Government for assistance; and that they had the men and the means to govern the country.

Sir Henry Loch still pressed for control of the settlement, and for annexation by the Crown. But he now found great powers arrayed against him. The Press of South Africa was all for the Company. The Cape Government exceeded its constitutional limitations by writing a minute to the High Commissioner strongly supporting Rhodes's claim. The Company was no less active in England, and as none could deny that Jameson and his forces had done the lion's share of the fighting or that the Company had borne the lion's share of the expense, Sir Henry Loch was overborne.

Yet in justice to the High Commissioner the historian must pay tribute both to the logic and the prescience of his case. If, he wrote to Lord Ripon on November 15, 1893, there was to be no limited system of administration (although under the Company), any supposed control of Her Majesty's Government would be a mere farce, and he went

on to predict that the next difficulties, which were already looming in the no distant future, would be with a foreign Power and not with a native tribe.

The Imperial Government did not share the shrewd prevision of its High Commissioner, all it saw clearly was that if it took control of the territory it would have to pay for the war, and so His Excellency fought a losing battle.

The issue was embittered by the activities of Henry Labouchere and the Aborigines Protection Society. The latter, which had been skilfully used by Mr. Maund and the other opponents of the Charter, still espoused the cause of the Matabele, heedless of the warnings of their missionary friends in South Africa. The former, a scion of the Hopes, the Barings, and the Laboucheres, yet expounded a Radical creed of the most austere financial asceticism. 'The burden of his argument,' according to his biographer, 'was always the impurity of motive arising from the financial interest involved.'<sup>1</sup> In Venezuela, in Egypt, in the Soudan, and in the Transvaal, he traced this clue to the infamy of every British cause. How Englishmen, not supported by their fathers, were to continue to exist without capital or enterprise, our public moralist never took the trouble to explain.

These and other criticisms had agitated Lord Ripon, then at the head of the Colonial Office, and before and during the campaign, as we gather from the Blue Books, he kept up a running fire of criticism and interference inspired by Labouchere and his allies. Sir Henry Loch, being nearer the spot, understood the situation better. And as we gather

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry Labouchere*, by Henry Thorold, p. 393.

from the correspondence since published, he stood up manfully both for Jameson and Rhodes. But he could not turn the edge of all the attacks, and was forced by his position to take up some of the questions and criticisms showered upon him from Downing Street. Jameson and Rhodes were thus harassed at every turn, as they thought by the High Commissioner, in reality by the Secretary of State and the enemy behind him.

This quarrel went bickering on, until in the end Rhodes carried his point, and Matabeleland came formally under the Administration of the Chartered Company. In the meantime Jameson found 'provisional' a blessed word; he did all things provisionally—rewarding his followers with provisional farms and laying out three miles to the south of the royal kraal the provisional site of the provisional town of Buluwayo.

Thus Sir Henry Loch telegraphs to Lord Ripon on December 28 :—

'Jameson informs me that no townships have been marked out, merely position of future townships discussed: men returning to Mashonaland are allowed to select positions for farms subject to my future approval.'

And again on December 29 :—

'No government is established in Matabeleland beyond what may be necessary to maintain order. There is no present extension of Government of Mashonaland. There is no appropriation of land. These questions are all dependent on future arrangements to be discussed between myself and Mr. Rhodes, and approved by Her Majesty's Government.'<sup>1</sup>

We find evidence of the wearing effect of these quarrels and misunderstandings in the bitter tone

<sup>1</sup> C. 7290 (1894), pp. 36, 37.

of Jameson's next letter to his brother, Sam, written from Buluwayo on January 28, 1894 :—

' . . . I have been hoping to get back to Mashonaland every week since the disbandment. Now the result of all this Imperial manœuvring and useless telegraphing is that I am evidently tied up here till the H.C. and Rhodes get to England in March. The whole thing has been the former's egotism and vainglory and he has to be let down lightly and gradually ; but of course that opinion must not even be thought of as coming from me. After all, though it makes a mess in Mashonaland and more bother in the future, it is perhaps as well to get the public accustomed to the fact that the country is perfectly settled and quiet, also I think I have now a fair chance of getting the King in if he does not die in the interval.'

In these anxieties Jameson is cheered by good reports from the prospectors :—

' M'Intyre has just brought in two pans with crushings from one of Willoughby's reefs—as good a show as I have ever seen ; Willoughby has now over 600 claims registered, and altogether there are well over 2000. From all the experts say, we are not going to be disappointed here in the gold. The only thing is it all takes such a devilish long time—one gets old before the results are seen.'

His old malady has been troubling him. Moreover : ' Four years of the veld continuously becomes monotonous, and the last six months with an H.C. to deal with has been most trying to temper.'

Then come speculations on the artistic future of Midge, who has settled in St. Ives and wants assegais and skins to decorate his studio : ' I think the only way to make Midge work would be to marry him to some devil of a woman with a big stick, so that she could keep him at it.'

It is plain from these letters that Jameson needed

a rest: temper and nerves were both worn. On February 17 he writes to Midge from Buluwayo that he has sent him forty assegais, a blunderbuss, a couple of skins, and half-a-dozen good skins from Palapye for the decoration of the studio at St. Ives, and he goes on:—

‘I am gradually getting things a bit shipshape here; but am still expecting trouble from the H.C. He is sending me a draft of his Government proposals this week and it is sure to be objectionable. I am rather sick of the whole thing; but have always the alternative of resigning. I don’t suppose I will, but it is comforting to know I don’t care much either way and it gives me a stronger hand. Loben I believe is dead, with a good crowd of those who fled with him into the low country. I have sent to get confirmation of this and expect to get answer in a couple of days. If not, I am going to take all our police down in that direction to clear up matters. Country perfectly quiet and mining and farming going on in all directions. Willoughby still with me and will stay till I go back to Salisbury. He is a loyal little chap and has been a great boon to me. At the end of the year whatever happens I have made up my mind for a trip home—more than five years in the veld is more than is good for any one’s digestion. . . . Write when you require money. My finances are not very brilliant, but I can always manage in case of necessity. This position is more expensive living than even my old Kimberley gambling days—a new country, I think, is made up of subscriptions, and the Administration is expected to make up the bulk. However, I am going to be miserly, stop spending capital, of which there is not much left, and really settle down to try and make some money for a rainy day,’ etc.

The negotiations dragged through the first half of 1894. On July 18, 1894, the Matabele Order in Council was at last issued. It confirmed the jurisdiction of the Company over Matabeleland, and set

forth the boundaries of the new State, now a vast country 1200 miles long by 500 broad, bordering the Transvaal on the south and the Portuguese territory on the east and west. With various aspects of this Order we shall have to deal later on. In the meantime we may say that it gave Jameson peace and his kingdom.

He had no longer to act provisionally or to expect the grudging assent or polite censure of the High Commissioner. He could order things to his own liking—at least within the narrow limits of his expenditure. And so he rode up and down the country, laying out townships, appointing magistrates and native commissioners, setting up court-houses and schools, cutting roads through the wilderness, granting lands, inspecting mines, settling tribal disputes, hearing cases, and acting generally as midwife to the State he had begotten. By May 1894 he was back in Salisbury, and if we were to make an itinerary of his journeys in these months—by ox-wagon, mule cart, and on foot—by rude tracks or in trackless country, it would show the tireless energy and undying courage of the man.

In these journeys he was frequently accompanied only by his servant, Garlick, a Wiltshire man who, in his youth, had served some time at sea—a dry, faithful, honest, matter-of-fact fellow—who has many stories of these days, when he drove the mules and the Doctor sat beside him jeering good-humouredly at his mistakes and gleefully prophesying disaster.

Once on the road to Buluwayo the mules were attacked by a pack of wild dogs. The animals plunged and reared and the cart was nearly thrown over in the wild hubbub that followed. Jameson

with his cigarette-holder in his mouth looked at the savage pack.

'Garlick,' he said, 'get down and cut out one of the mules.'

And Garlick jumped down from the driver's seat and with his knife cut the harness of a poor beast that was already being torn to pieces, and jumping up again drove on with the rest of the team while the dogs fought over their prey.

Again in the evening, on the edge of the sand veld south of Salisbury, when they were outspanning, they heard the noise of a struggle in the neighbouring bush. Creeping through the trees, they saw a lion at the throat of a fine sable antelope.

'Now, Garlick,' said the Doctor, 'you have often wanted to shoot a lion. There's your chance.'

Garlick ran to the cart for a rifle; but in his excitement, as he was returning, he fell into a hole and the gun went off.

The lion was scared and went, leaving the antelope dead on the veld. Then Garlick, bitterly disappointed, vowed that he would wait up by the kill and shoot the lion when it returned.

'Now don't be an ass,' said the Doctor, 'you know what a coward you are.'

'Yes,' said Garlick, 'I know that; but I shall take measures with myself.'

So Garlick took his station on an ant-heap within a few yards of the dead buck and bound himself firmly with a reim to a tree that grew out of the ant-hill. 'Now,' he said to himself, 'even if I want to I cannot run away.'

The stars came out and the moon rose and Garlick waited. After some hours of suspense, when the moon was already high in the heavens, Garlick heard



or saw a dusky form creeping up through the bush. Presently it came out into the open under the ant-heap, and Garlick perceived that it was a lioness. He resolved not to shoot it, but to wait for the lion.

Presently another shadowy form stole through the bushes. This time it was the lion. And now the two animals, without touching the kill, played and gambolled and made love under the moon, round the ant-hill on which Garlick stood.

Then Garlick—although he was no more a coward than most of us—began to feel physical fear. The horrid beasts were sometimes within five yards of him. Their eyes glowed like coals. He dared not shoot one for fear of the other, he could not untie the thongs with which he had bound himself; and so he waited, hung there in suspense, tied up with his own sailor-knots, not knowing what to do for what seemed to be hours and hours. Then in desperation he fired his repeating rifle thrice—into the air. The lion and lioness bounded away, and presently the Doctor came running up.

‘What a —— ass you are, Garlick!’ he said as he cut his bonds and led him back to camp. Then he gave poor Garlick a stiff whisky and sent him to bed.

Jameson must have worked amazingly in those early months of 1894. He interviewed every head man in Matabeleland from Mjan, the Commander-in-Chief whom he had defeated, downwards. In Buluwayo he had to superintend the building of a township which grew in nine months to a population of 1900 whites—with 600 of the Matabele to make bricks for the houses. He had to get rid of a lot of ‘Johannesburg lambs’ who terrorised and demoralised the community; he had to keep an eye on an

army of 2000 prospectors who wandered over Matabeleland. By the end of 1894 he had 1000 miles of made roads in the country; the Beira railway was 'through the fly' to Chimoio, and the 230 miles of road from Chimoio to Salisbury was covered by a coach service of less than two days. The 500 miles from Mafeking to Buluwayo was covered in five days by a weekly service, so that already Rhodesia had—as things were reckoned in South Africa—quick communication with east and west.

In such and other ways Dr. Jameson laboured to get his new country straight, although he felt himself, as we have seen in his letters, at the end of his tether. Then in the latter part of the year Rhodes came up from Cape Town and the two together started upon a tour through Matabeleland and Mashonaland.

Now Rhodes had invited Mr. John Hays Hammond, an American mining engineer, to report on the mining prospects of the territory, and Mr. Hammond brought startling intelligence from Johannesburg, intelligence of such moment as to give a new turn to our story.

## CHAPTER XXI

### ROUND THE CAMP-FIRE

'There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered.'

MR. HAMMOND came, a messenger of fate laden with the heavy destinies of these two men. He brought portentous news, ominous messages. But neither the messenger who bore them nor the two friends who received them could have felt the burden of fatality as they took their tranquil and leisurely way over the high spacious plains up there as it were on the roof of Africa. There with their wagons on the open veld, with game to shoot and with Tony to cook, under the sun, under the stars, in that uplifting air, in that new, clean, and boundless country, there was laughter, there was keen talk, there were the exhilaration of past success and the inspiration of great projects but no shadow of the impending disaster.

Mr. Hammond furnished Michell, the biographer of Rhodes, with an account of this visit, how they rode together and drove together for weeks on end, how his opinion on the minerals of the country was 'of the greatest moment to Rhodes, both for political and financial reasons,' yet how 'during the many days that we rode and drove together there was not the slightest attempt on his part to obtain from me any premature expression as to the value of the country.' Such was Rhodes's delicacy of mind;

but Mr. Hammond also has his reticence, for he does not mention the one great subject upon which these three certainly *did* talk. We hear of it, however, from Jameson, who said, long afterwards, to a certain Select Committee: 'At the end of 1893, shortly after the conclusion of the Matabele War, I had many conversations with Mr. Rhodes on the subject of the Federation of South Africa, and the obstacles presented to this by the attitude of the South African Republic.' And Jameson adds that while they were still discussing this problem, 'about the middle of 1894,' John Hays Hammond came up to Matabeleland with a very important contribution to the debate. 'Unless a radical change was made,' Mr. Hammond told them, 'there would be a rising of the people of Johannesburg.' As a fact he came up to them because by this time it was obvious that there were only two men who mattered.

Here, again, we might almost reconstruct the talk not between two this time but between three. The scene, of course, is different, no longer the tin bungalow in Kimberley, but the velvety sky with the Southern Cross hung like a jewel above, a roaring camp-fire, throwing dramatic gleams and shadows strange as their own fates on and around the three figures before it, behind them Tony, the mules, and the wagons, and the stillness beyond broken now and then by the nightmare laugh of a hyena or the roar of a prowling lion, mockeries and threats from the darkness.

Two of the men are the same, and yet different; Jameson, with success behind him, more ardent, more impatient, more swift even than before in leaping to his conclusions, and Rhodes now no longer urging but restraining, well aware of the

profound deeps of the subject which the others discussed more lightly. And the engineer, incisive and accurate in his report of the situation down there, with an American contempt for those voortrekking Doppers—slow as the Pennsylvania Dutch—those sleepy, obstinate, hostile, suspicious, cunning, and malevolent people who bothered them, who got in their way, who obstructed them, who were trying to prevent them making a really great country of it.

Rhodes did not quite feel like that. No, one knew Kruger; he had his hobby, his game, one had played against him, one respected him. One liked those Boers; one had one's friends among them. But what was the news? One wanted to know everything. One really must know all about it, before even trying to decide.

Well, the news was serious. Rhodes and Jameson knew very well that it was impossible for the mining industry to work with Kruger. It had been obvious as far back at least as 1890 when Kruger had visited Johannesburg and had refused to give the people what they wanted—railway communication with the South—and the Transvaal flag had been torn down and trampled underfoot. . . . Yes, of course, one knew all that.

The quarrel had simmered on. The Uitlanders had a right to the vote; they paid nearly all the taxes. In America, and *now* in England—that made the little row between us, you remember—here Rhodes made a grimace—it was a fundamental principle: no taxation without representation.

They might skip all that: the Uitlanders had been to Kruger, had been to the Volksraad, a dozen times—deputations, monster petitions, and all the rest of it. And how had they been received? Rhodes

knew perfectly. The papers were full of it. With insults and threats—told to go to hell, that's what it came to. Something to make the blood of an Anglo-Saxon boil in his veins.

The industry had been depressed: admitted the slump had something to do with it. But then Kruger had had something to do with the slump. Think of the dynamite monopoly, the corruption, the inefficiency, those Hollanders. . . .

Yes, the Rand had contrived to rub along; but recently things had become quite intolerable. Men without votes—bank-clerks, young engineers, necessary people—Kruger takes 'em up out on commando against some Kafir chief who would not pay his taxes, somewhere away up in the northern Transvaal. Think of it! They had had to provide their own rifles and horses and to go away and fight in a quarrel of which they knew nothing—except that they were treated as the Kafir was treated—paying taxes without votes!

Of course there had been a row—a terrific row. Rifle clubs, secret societies, plots to capture the President and blow up public buildings, mass meetings, telegrams to the Colonial Office, and so forth—all the signs of revolution. The High Commissioner had come up to Pretoria. There had been wild scenes—unfortunate scenes. The President had been—unintentionally—insulted. The open carriage—with Loch inside, had been dragged along from the railway station to the hotel by a British crowd singing 'God Save the Queen' and 'Rule, Britannia!' One enthusiastic ass on the box, waving a Union Jack, had let the folds of the flag fall over the President behind him. Kruger in his irritation had struck the flag with his stick, or so it was said. All

very unfortunate, comically unfortunate. Oom Paul had been left in his horseless carriage, while the British deputation trooped to the hotel to present their address to the High Commissioner, who had just saved the situation by calling for three cheers for the President.

The High Commissioner refused to go to Johannesburg fearing trouble, but he had said the most significant things to the Johannesburg members of the deputation. He had actually asked them what arms they possessed.

All Johannesburg was buzzing with it. The High Commissioner had even told one of them that if there had been enough rifles and ammunition he would certainly have come over; that he had prolonged the Swazie agreement for six months, that he supposed in that time Johannesburg would be better prepared. The British Government, evidently, were prepared to interfere—actively.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot say, of course, that Mr. Hammond actually told Rhodes and Jameson all this; but it is certain that these events were at that time the talk of South Africa. Sir Henry Loch had arrived in Pretoria on June 24, just in time, as he reported to Lord Ripon, to avert a revolution, and as the visit of Mr. Hammond to Rhodesia followed close on that date, we may take it that the story was told and debated, and every incident weighed in the scales of these three acute intellects, round the camp-fire.

We believe also—so Rhodes long afterwards con-

<sup>1</sup> Such and other phrases alleged to have been used by the High Commissioner gained wide currency at the time, and are still repeated when the tale is told. Sir Henry Loch was no doubt misunderstood. His intention was, as he afterwards explained, to warn Johannesburg against any resort to violence. See Lord Loch's statement in the House of Lords, May 1, 1896, and his letter to the Press.

fided to another round another camp-fire—that Mr. Hammond not only opened out the case of the Uitlanders to Rhodes and Jameson, there in Matabeleland, but said that they were resolved upon a change of government by force if persuasion failed, and asked Rhodes if he was prepared to help them.

It is certain that both Rhodes and Jameson sympathised heartily with the Uitlanders. Jameson was still by paternal tradition a Liberal in politics. Sir Henry Loch served a Liberal Government: his attitude was in accord with the Liberal tradition—no taxation without representation. Jameson was all for progress, all for development, and he had no patience with Kruger and Krugerism. As for Rhodes, he was himself a miner. He had been up there from the earliest days. *Qua* the Transvaal, as he would have said, what better right had Kruger in that country than he had himself. Kruger had trekked into it as a lad from Richmond in the Cape Colony. Rhodes also as a lad had trekked into it, and as a young man he had pegged out his claims in the Witwatersrand. The Boer Government, overdrawn at the bank, on the verge of bankruptcy, had begged the miners to come in and save them. And the miners had been as good as their word—they had saved the State from bankruptcy. They had made the Transvaal a rich and prosperous country. The farmers themselves, whose land had not been worth sixpence an acre, owed almost everything to the mining industry. Rhodes, with this experience, could hardly be unsympathetic.

Yet what was to the mining engineer a grievance of the miners and the people of Johannesburg, what was to Jameson an appropriate subject for one of his swift surgical operations, was to Rhodes some-



thing very much more, much deeper, much older. It involved nothing less than the future of all South Africa, and the long, long thoughts of his youth.

And so we may imagine him advising caution, suggesting delay. One disliked short cuts, one rather distrusted violence, although of course Jameson rather bowled one out there with his feats of arms. One had been working on this question for years—ever since 1881. Kruger had his hobby: one respected Kruger. He wanted a Republican South Africa. It was really a fight between two ideas. It was like the amalgamation of the diamond mines. One had to hold what the other man wanted. One had to hold the balance of the map. Jameson had heard all that. The Doctor was nowise backward in saying that he had. Of course he had; but that was no reason why he should not hear it all over again. Why, the only way to carry one's point was to repeat the same thing over and over again. Then people understood. Railways were also important. One had tried to unite South Africa by railways. One had failed so far, but one was still hammering at it.

Here Jameson was likely to interrupt with—What about Delagoa Bay?

And Rhodes would probably reply as he trusted these two men: Well, one was still trying to buy Delagoa Bay; but one must not say much about that; it was difficult to buy a thing so obviously rising in value! One had, however, suggested a globular sum.

And if these encircling manoeuvres failed, what then?

One did not like to contemplate the alternative.

One had one's friends . . . Jan, and all his people. One was not like Hammond ; one was not impatient with the Dutch ; one worked with them.

Here Mr. Hammond might possibly have said that *his* friends intended to go on : that they despaired of concessions from Kruger : that they might form an alliance with the more enlightened and progressive Dutch in the Transvaal ; and with their help create a new and strong and efficient Republic.

If the visitor made such an observation, Rhodes must have pondered over it—must have grimaced afresh—not at all liking the prospect. He was by genius and experience all against short cuts. A few months before he had said that Union was a thing to be brought about gradually—‘step by step, in accordance with the feeling and sentiment of the people as a whole.’ ‘Never hurry and hasten in anything,’ he had said ; ‘it took me twenty years to amalgamate the diamond mines.’

One had one's plan. One would say to the Transvaal : *You* want land, well *I* have the North and West. *You* want a market, well *here* are the Cape Colony and Rhodesia. *You* want communications, well *here* is the Cape railway system. *You* want a South African State, well *here* are the self-governing colonies ; their yoke is easy and their burden is light ; together they are much bigger than you are, and as they are a part of the British Empire, if you want all these things you must also become a part of it. Amalgamate !

But there was this Delagoa Bay railway, and this other danger of a strong Republican party arising in Johannesburg and combining with the progressive Boers. Then the balance might be altered. A powerful Republic with the gold of Witwatersrand,

its lure of trade, its own railway system, would be, *qua* Republic, far more formidable than Kruger's obscurantism. It might hold the balance; it might draw the Colonies into its orbit; all South Africa might join such a Republic.

So Rhodes, balancing and testing once more, elephant-wise, these considerations, remained undecided. He asked for time. One must go to Johannesburg and see how things really stood. Jameson might go into that, and let one know. One must keep in touch with this Reform movement in case one's own plans failed.

And so these camp-fire conferences ended, upon a note of hesitation, a stipulation of delay.

END OF VOL. I.

